'WHERE THERE IS NO VISION THE PEOPLE PERISH'

The Poetry Review

*

EDITORIAL BOARD

Thomas Moult (Chairman)
Stephen Graham
Geoffrey Johnson
John Graddon
Miss E. D. Bangay
Mrs Kathleen V. Richardson
Kennedy Williamson
Rev. F. Pratt Green

*

33 PORTMAN SQUARE
LONDON W I
Telephone: Welbeck 9393

*

TRADE AGENTS
The Rolls House Publishing Co
3 Breams Buildings
London E C 4

*

ADVERTISING AGENTS
Aldridge Press Ltd
27 Chancery Lane
London W C 2

VOLUME XLVII · NUMBER I

CONTENTS

*

Prelude: Happy New Year 3
A Girl's Hymn of Praise, Winifred Bourne Medway 6
In the Weald, A. E. Coppard 7
The Beauty of Snow, E. R. Gordon 7
Mortality, William Kean Seymour 8
From 'Les Heures Claires', John Redwood-Anderson 8
Theatre Outing, Edwin Hargrave 9
Shoppers, Margaret Rhodes 9
Four Poems, John Graddon 10
The Ride From Hell, Herbert Palmer 12
Edelweiss in the Mountains, A. V. Stuart 15
Elegy on a Poet's Death, D. S. Thomas 15
Robert Frost at Home, Marc T. Greene 16
Age, Jean Bowman 18
Galatea, Alun Llewellyn 19
In the Commercial World, K. J. D. Smith 19
Rain, James Harrison 20
Ireland, Brian Cleeve 20
John Leyden – The Paradox of Genius, Alexander Buist 21
Autumn is a Half-way House, Rita Spurr 25
In a Tropical Forest, Raymond Tong 26
The Swan, A. V. Stuart 26
The Wishing Bough, Odette Tchernine 27
Autumn in Boundary Wood, Michael Thomas 28
African At a Meeting, Betty Parvin 28
One Hour in Settignano, Italy, Margaret Howard 29
'My Book of the Year': An Editorial Symposium 30
Thoughts before Sleep, W. H. Boore 33
Poem of Simple Magnanimity, G. Richman 33
The Continental Breakfast, John Bayliss 34
'Dear Editors –', Herbert Palmer, Kenneth Hare, J. J. Hamilton, Rita Spurr, Beresford Richards 35

Heritage of Poetry, Stephen Graham 37
The Pursuit of Poetry, Kathleen Valmai Richardson 38
Prosody without Tears, Evelyn D. Bangay 39
Iconoclast and Idol, F. Pratt Green 40
Change and Interchange, Robert Armstrong 41
A Publisher is a Poet, P. D. Cummins 42
Histories and Anthologies, Stuart Holroyd 43
Five Fathoms, Geoffrey Johnson 44
Heart and Mind, Geoffrey Johnson 45
Keats and Wordsworth, Evelyn D. Bangay 46
The Spoken Word, John Graddon 46
Competitions for Everybody 47
Last Lines, Palgrave Q. Dobree 48
Latest Prize Reports and Awards 53
Daylight, Denis Marshall 53
Achilles, Mary Jane Ferguson 55
Portman Square – Curtain Up 56
Poets' Pleasure: News from the Centres 57
Annual General Meeting 64
New Year Evenings at '33' 64

*

Next Issue:

LADY MARGARET SACKVILLE

LOUIS GOLDING

JACK LINDSAY

Many Poems of Distinction

A New Albert Ralph Korn Competition

and our £100 Contest continued

TO MEMBERS AND FRIENDS: IF YOU CAN PLEASE BUY THE BOOKS THAT ARE PUBLISHED BY OUR ADVERTISERS YOU WILL BE GIVING HELP ALL ROUND

TO OUR WOULD-BE CONTRIBUTORS

*

IN YOUR OWN INTEREST READ CAREFULLY –

1. **No manuscripts can be considered** which have not the name and address of the author stated in the top left-hand corner of the first page. If he is a member of the Society a bracketed M should be added.
2. **A self-addressed stamped envelope** must always be enclosed or, if an overseas contributor, the Coupon-Response International. Otherwise, no MSS will be considered. Loose stamps cannot be regarded as a substitute. Except in rare instances an introductory letter is not necessary.
3. One side only of the paper must be used: typescript is preferred.
4. Reasonable margins and top space should be left.
5. Not more than four poems should be submitted at one time. Two is an ideal number.
6. Poems over thirty lines in length have a doubtful chance of acceptance.
7. If helpful editorial suggestions are made with a returned MS, please do not reply challenging the advice. Requests for criticism, moreover, are not invited. It should be remembered that The Poetry Society already has a well-organized service for expert advice, as announced in each issue.
8. The Editorial Board does not accept responsibility for the safe custody and return of any unsolicited MSS. Authors are requested not to write expressing anxiety lest their MS is lost in the post. MSS are seldom or never lost in the post.
9. Acceptance or rejection of a MS cannot reasonably be expected until at least three months have elapsed. Inquiries by telephone cannot be dealt with.
10. The receipt of a proof does not necessarily imply immediate publication.

THESE PAGES – AN OFFERING TO

Gilbert Murray

Oh for a deep and dewy spring,
With runlets cold to draw and drink!
And a great meadow blossoming . . .

Prelude: HAPPY NEW YEAR

If we are as grateful for life as we ought to be, the coming of another New Year will be observed in a way that is different. Each First of January must seem 'a special gift: something that might not have been . . . Why am I allowed another?' Few people count their blessings as movingly as Gilbert Chesterton did, but the true artist – as true as 'G.K.C.' was – is among them: and in return he makes the true artist's gesture.

He is lavish with his possessions. He gives everything he is and has to the rose in his poem, the Madonna and Child in his painting – or to the science laboratory, the factory chimney, the operating theatre, whatever his subject may be. He does not hold back: his heart tells him not to. Flowers and children, of course, otherwise beauty and love, are still many an artist's ideal: and if this is so, then however loudly his critics demand something alien and possibly monstrous from his brush or pen, he remains steadfast to whatever enables him to interpret triumphantly his own innocence and wisdom, his awe and compassion – for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven within him.

His individual vision is one of unclouded joy or exalted sorrow, an adored love or a loveless life, a waste land or a green and pleasant landscape: be that as it may, he, always human, has a victory through his art that is doubly sure and certain if he knows that others read his poem or look at his picture with an inward glow.

*

A true artist, one of distinction among English painters, has been lavish in a material sense. He is John Strevens, and the year just ended was enriched and illuminated for The Poetry Society by his gift of two beautiful pictures, expressing such gratitude and indeed reverence for life that they will surely refresh and uplift the hearts of all who in the years to come are able to see them in our London home, where they were unveiled by the President at a little ceremony on the eve of Christmas.

'He that believeth shall not make haste.' So our Holy Writ instructs us, and we linger happily on the artist's pattern of flowers, radiant with colour and gleaming as with morning dew, and on the adorable grouping of children, innocent and wise, but not more so than their creator. We find ourselves sharing the artist's conviction that flowers do not wither nor children grow old: that change is renewal, and in the passing of things is the promise of their safe return.

Poetry in paint! And who more fitting that this painter of poems could, through art, speak of the moment that endures, of the heaven secure within the human heart against all time and grief. For the pictures have become ours in memory of his wife.

*

Another gift for remembrance is the first fruit of the late Alice Hunt Bartlett's bequest for the furtherance of our work, and readers may find something to their advantage if they turn to page 47. Something substantial, because the gift is like the pitcher of milk in the charming folk-tale re-told by Washington Irving. A poor old couple had given shelter to a wandering stranger who, being regarded as an 'enemy' in those uncouth days, was stoned by the villagers. When it was safe for him to venture out and away they found that in gratitude he had touched with magic the pitcher of milk and the loaf, so that for the rest of their humble lives there was bread always, and milk that never became less.

In other words, the Alice Hunt Bartlett bequest will ensure a whole series of fascinating contests. Also there are several in addition to give a unique send-off to The Poetry Society's year 1956. A new Albert Ralph Korn competition will follow a contest that marks the centenary of the death of Poland's greatest poet, Adam Mickiewicz.

This will arouse an interest of its own. Not only the student of world affairs, but the man in the street also, has become internationally-minded. Cataclysmic events of the past forty years, far-reaching and disruptive, have forced him to feel as vitally concerned about other countries as he used to be about his own. Countless English-speaking people who recall the musician-patriot, Chopin, and the sacrifice he made for his troubled country, will have shared the salute to Mickiewicz, whose influence on the West, like Byron's – 'a tremendous impact' – was emphasized in Paris by a statue of Mickiewicz. He is carrying a pilgrim's staff and gazing towards the horizon – with hope.

*

What magic casements Professor Gilbert Murray opened for us in the early years of this century with his translations from the Greek of Euripides into English rhyming verse! A generation no longer young will remember the thrill of reading them for the first time – and especially of hearing and seeing our own Sybil Thorndike as Phaedra in *Hippolytus*, the play which, more than the others, had become an English poem.

Gilbert Murray is, happily, still among us. He celebrates his ninetieth birthday this January, and in accordance with our custom of dedicating an issue of *The Poetry Review* to a poet for his outstanding contribution to literature, we honour him.

*

It is our privilege to print in the following pages another of Herbert Palmer's poems, revised and enlarged since it was originally published here in January–February, 1951. The reader is thus offered the opportunity which W. B. Yeats also used to give, of following the development of a poet's mind to finality.

Another poet whose contributions to *The Poetry Review* are well remembered is Ruth Pitter, and readers will be interested to know that when she received

the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry in the autumn she said frankly in a newspaper that she has always tried to be one of the 'golden kind' of poets – 'those who find in the life about them a glory, a beauty, and a satisfaction.' Incidentally, Miss Pitter went on to speak of T. S. Eliot as a contributor to 'a disaster to English poetry . . . by taking it away from the common man and making it the province of the few.'

*

With regret that they have passed from us, and gratitude for their association with The Poetry Society, we add four distinguished names to the past year's roll of obituaries. Beatrice Kean Seymour was described in *The Times* memoir as 'a novelist of charm and power', and the Shakespearian scholarship of Howard Parsons has frequently impressed itself on our pages in recent years. Mr. Parsons contributed a sonnet to our last issue, and through his generosity a number of prize competitions have been organized in his name. It is seemly that we should suspend the current contest until a future number. We have lost a greatly valued member. To his widow and daughter we extend our sympathy.

*

Sir Ronald Storrs, who died on All Saints Day, was an influential publicist with a deep and abiding love of poetry, and for many years one of our vice-presidents. He was in his element when he presided at a luncheon or some other function, reading and talking poetry with spirit and impeccable taste. With natural pride he would show the personal anthology compiled and given to him by his war-time associate, Lawrence of Arabia. Sir Ronald's regard for poetry illuminates the autobiography, *Orientations*, of this brilliant public servant who was a successor of Pontius Pilate as Governor of Jerusalem and Judea.

Neither the lengthy obituaries of Lord Horder nor the many tributes to him had reference to the enthusiasm for poetry which justified his active association with The Poetry Society. He was especially devoted to the work and memory of his one-time tenant, Edward Thomas, to whom he erected a memorial at Steep, Petersfield, and whose poems he was delighted to read at our meetings with the soft intonation of his native Wessex. Mr. J. G. Wilson recalls with pleasure the frequent visits of Lord Horder to the Bumpus bookshop in search of collections of old poetry, by Emerson in particular. His was an eternal quest for inspiration, knowledge, and beauty.

*

Postscripts. – Members and readers are invited to make use of the new and charming Rest Room which has been opened at 33 Portman Square . . . The *Sunday Times* £1,000 prize for literature, 1954–55, was awarded to Richard Church for his autobiography, *Over the Bridge*. No need to introduce Mr. Church here: in any case he will introduce himself at our Friday Reading on 6th January . . . Quotation from a newspaper criticism of a recent Shakespeare production at the Old Vic: 'Margaret Rawlings, as the alternately pleading and righteously indignant Paulina, came like a cleansing, vigorous north wind.'

THE EDITORIAL BOARD

Premium Prize Poem

A GIRL'S HYMN OF PRAISE

WINIFRED BOURNE MEDWAY

O rose, that of your charity
Has dressed my lip and cheek for me;
O lily, giving of your white
A groundwork smooth of living light;
O night, that of your dark did spare
To make the curtain of my hair;
O soft bronze leaves, that made my eyes
While full of Spring, yet Autumn-wise;
O slender birch, so straight and high,
Drawing my limbs towards the sky;
O coral, that from listening lands
Completes the tapering of my hands;
To you, who dress my form and face,
I clasp my hands and say my grace!

O little shells, whose sorrow could
Blossom in pearls upon my snood;
O silk-worms spinning silk for me
To make me gowns of quality,
Ribbon and sash, and petticoat
That, soft as clouds, around me float;
And for your singing voice, O doves,
My thanks to you, my thanks, dear loves!

But most I owe my fealty
To those who dress my soul for me.
This warmth of heart and thought of snow
No dues to rose and lily owe;
Not twilight, but the spirit's sense,
Gave to my mind its reticence;
The sparkle that my words enhance
Comes from no star's insensate glance;
No bird could teach me wheat from chaff,
No brook instruct me how to laugh;
'Tis heavenward my thanks must be
Though couched in human frailty.

Then, candle out, beside my bed,
With faults confessed and downbent head,
That last best gift with praise I mark,
That Angel, burning through the dark,
Who nightly comes to sprinkle me
With dews of immortality.

IN THE WEALD

A. E. COPPARD

I love the happy down
That sits against the sky,
The brown church in the vale,
The white cloud on the hill;
My grateful soul at gaze
In all that beauty glowing
Sighs in my breast with grave
Sublimity of joy.

I love those tiny birds
That carol on the down
Unlauded – though they match
The singers of the grove.
As fair the songs, as sweet,
As passionate are these
As God Apollo's, toiling
In the warm wondering dawn
At King Admetus' farm.

THE BEAUTY OF SNOW

E. R. GORDON

Weighed down by snow, so lovely, yet grotesque,
The trees are bowing in a grave gavotte,
As though in answer to the humoresque
Played by the wind. Perhaps the wife of Lot
Was no more pillar'd than the icy branch
Or silver'd trunk, a living, gracious Muse,
Now overcome by sudden avalanche,
Reveals the darkness of the lacy yews.

MORTALITY

WILLIAM KEAN SEYMOUR

Now that I cross the threshold of old age,
And see time's shadows lengthening gaunt and black,
My soul recoils as from a narrowing cage,
I hear the gate, its harsh metallic clack.
Yet I have sensed the gold and blue of life,
Drunk deep of happiness; I shall not cringe
Before the Jailer and his severing knife,
Or plead when heart and gleaming blade impinge.
Death comes to all life's lovers: as a bee,
Lingering on sweetness, in the tempest caught,
Is blown full-tilt athwart a ravening sea,
Last honey garnered and last battle fought;
Or if reprieved by drifting spar or cask,
Finds death's respite a longer, lonelier task.

FROM 'LES HEURES CLAIRES'

Emile Verhaeren, 1855–1955

JOHN REDWOOD-ANDERSON

This carved barbaric capital where monsters writhe
Welded in one by grip of teeth and claws,
In a mad riot of blood, of ardent cries,
Of wounds, and jaws fixed fast in jaws –
This was myself till thou wast mine,
O thou the new, O thou the old!
Who camest unto me
From out the depths of thine
Eternity,
Came with the fire and gentleness thy two hands hold.

I feel that in thee sleep
The self-same things and deep
That in myself in slumber lie,
And that our thirst of memory
Drinks up the echoed sweet
Where our two pasts in mutual converse meet.

Our eyes needs must have shed their tears
At the same hours, unwittingly,

Through infancy;
Known the same joys and the same fears,
Flashed with one light of confidence!
For I am bound to thee by that Unknown
Which fixed me with its glance
Far down the adventurous ways
Where in old days my life was thrown;
And in me lies
This certainty, that had my gaze
More steadfast been,
Long since I should have seen
Opening beneath the lids of It – thine eyes.

THEATRE OUTING

EDWIN HARGRAVE

Through tunnels of green
to the river at Stratford
where arching bridges
meet their completion
in reflections of water
drifting wrinkle-lazy.

There swans of Avon
with white grace
and effortless movings
shame in half a glide
all sculpture and movement –
yet they snatch in one ignoble gobble
all the sandwich
and half the fingers holding it.

SHOPPERS

MARGARET RHODES

Like gulls on the wind the women came sailing,
Their skirts billowing, winged willy-nilly, each passer-by
Leaning on the storm and hailing
Shrill as a bird's cry.

Wheeling in from the harbour came the cloud of birds
Spindrift in their eyes, spreadeagled breasting the crest of the hill:
Only the anchoring baskets, above the wind's words,
Proclaimed them earthbound still.

FOUR POEMS

JOHN GRADDON

CHRISTMAS

Just for this space in time, let us forget
That we are bound within the web of fate
That man calls life; forget that we are trussed,
Secure and impotent; and, as ourselves,
So is our land cocooned and each bound land
Is tied with countless threads of economic
Laws enmeshing all this complex world:
Forget the hardship, grief and pain of war:
Forget the evil man has done to man;
Forget the things we haven't got; ignore
The apprehensive future, view the drab
And dreary days with tolerance and live
Again the miracle of Christmastide.

We can remember there was once a Star
When Innocence, new born, brought hope for all
Mankind. So long ago and from that time
Man's history runs grimy through the years;
And yet, we can return each year and find
The story fresh and pure and kind and true.
It is ourselves that fail to keep the Star
Aglow in daily life. For this year let
The children enter where the Child lay,
To catch perchance an everlasting glimpse
Of God's intention and our hope. For then
The Star which shone that day will shine again.

Forget all else save this, for with our thoughts,
Our prayers must rise in gratitude to those
Who gave their unexpended years for peace
And paid with death too personal for price.

FERTILITY

Within my seed there lies
  A greater cajoler of the earth
    Than I.

He'll tread this world – his grape –
  To elevate his spirits
    For his life.

He'll eye the spheres selectively
To find the next progressive problem
For his mind.

He'll pass his seed on – so
He'll travel all the years.
So will I.
So will I.

HOW DECEIVE THE LIGHTNING?

I took my winter thoughts to play
Around the deadest tree in town.
(How Hyde a death in this outrageous Park?)
A lance of silver leapt from bark to root
And burnt the sappy blood as sacrifice
To some primordial altar.
Habitual roots held fast the shaken earth.
A tree, notoriously alone,
Ungiven to fear and unforlorn,
Stood to the urgency of spring,
Quite dead.

DEATH HAS ALL THE PERQUISITES

The wisps of babes unborn.
Children as primitive as the engaging earth.
New lovers fresh as the first fear.
The ambitious with their sweat sweet upon them.
The gay, un-minded.
The sad, grey-winded.
Those with an unknown courage.
Those with a mouthless fear.
The absence that is a politician.
The humble who fear God.
The arrogant who fear themselves.
The old with only the last curiosity.
All these and others.
Why must the old Janitor have you?
As well – you?
Why can't he leave you?
Forget you?
Only you?

THE RIDE FROM HELL

HERBERT PALMER

But chivalry is dead in this black land.
Up to the saddle, love, and tie your bows –
The blue one hints an astral high command;
As for the green, it tells more hope than rose.

Spring to my saddle, love, and say your prayers;
We'll not be food for flies this tarrying dawn;
Look at yon Eye which over Venus stares!
Men can't see that, no, neither king nor pawn.

God's a mere shade, they're always so withdrawn,
Down on the ground and at their clouded meals –
Breakfasting on the brandling every morn,
Then chewing dung, and biting on their heels.

This is no world for justice or fair deeds;
Leave it to curs and fools – and blind applause.
The spirit turns; and then the spirit bleeds.
The Ape-man holds a kingdom in his jaws . . .

Ten minutes lost! No, no, the fault's not yours,
But that strange gibbering sound – it forced a pause.
Now we are off! He wins who high endures,
And we've endured, unconquered by Death's laws.

Sit still, cling tight, but leave my sword-arm free,
We'll trust the reins to luck, the horse knows all;
His sire, they say, had wings, trod sky and sea,
Grew harpstrings in his forehead ere his fall.

We'll ride and ride and ride, O, beat them yet!
We'll leave them to their mouth-gags and their lies.
The envious shall hunger to forget,
The false, who still can see, for blinded eyes.

Away! Away! Beyond the steep ascent.
Beyond the ruined palace staring south!
Do you remember where our dreams were rent,
And how they jeered and sat upon your mouth?

On! On! . . . Three leagues! The dawn shows diamond-clear;
Its far light glints on yonder cinder-row.
But hush your singing! Death himself may hear,
And slag and ash conspire to overthrow.

'Tis a vile country, grim with hate and fear;
The thistle blooms where might have bloomed the rose;
Here all is soiled and shadow-dark and sear,
But we will leave it ere a watcher knows.

No, no one follows! Silent is the rear.
Five leagues! The slag-heaps lessen. Dawn's aglow;
It streaks that chasm, sloping seamed and sheer
To gaping depths of even darker woe.

How swiftly goes the horse! Not yet an hour;
Seven leagues! The light shines azure on the wold.
They've got the ground, but we, the heavenly power;
Ours the brave sky, though theirs the iron and gold.

What do they feel outside their ordered sphere? –
Their ant-hill on the midden in the snow.
Strange how a man may be a crawler here
And yet stand up to tell the oak to grow.

No cranny left for worship – or love's fire.
Even their hate is as the glacier's cold.
All passion here is visionless desire,
Love's aching mouth upon the rust and mold.

But how can vision reign, or thought aspire
When pride and selfhood are so loud and bold?
The dullest hand may pluck the choral wire,
The youngest fool put down the wise and old.

Their songs are but the vapours of the clay,
Their paintings, blotching of the true and fine;
They hate the kindling colours of the day,
And round their hearts the midnight falsehoods twine.

Hark, how the barrier river roars in flood!
That's a fair land upon the greenwood side.
We'll get there, mud or water, fire or blood.
But first try right, the left road meets the tide.

There's light there, all that highest light allures . . .
Here light draws darkness, light of craft and guile;
Only Truth's bonfire triumphs and endures,
And the dim marsh-light of the Devil's smile.

They level all, to nourish Envy's shears;
They have no honour, and they pay no dues;
They scourge the eyes and crucify the ears;
But the river shouts defiance at their views.

What's that you say – ten sentries guard the bridge? . . .
O, we'll crush them into shadows if they stay!
A man's a pawn, but half a man's a midge;
Those soldiers are like flies that smudge the day.

Not far to win! We'll rive the final bar.
Now you may do the thing the horse desires –
Sing to the sun and every sleeping star.
'Twill break the hearts of all those rogues and liars;

For once I heard a bard who'd voice so sweet
It raised a dead man in his burial shroud,
And one, his murderer, grovelled at their feet . . .
Sing, love, for you sing like him, sweet and loud!

No wrong could triumph where that song had sway,
It breathed the arrowed brightness of the sky.
Sing louder, love! It is the astral way,
The sure and keen and shattering reply –

To change the dark to light, despair to hope,
And lame the parching feet of Greed and Pride.
Wind, rain and dew upon each withered slope!
Colour and fire upon each misted tide! . . .

Look! Look! They quail. Death's henchmen flee the bridge.
Men wave and cheer upon the greenwood side.
And see, far out, those towers on mountain ridge!
The king lives there; so thither we will ride.

*

DO'S AND DON'TS. – *Attention is drawn to the newly-revised column of Advice to Would-be Contributors on Page Two of this Number (facing the Editorial 'Prelude').*

EDELWEISS IN THE MOUNTAINS

(From the German of Ruth Schaumann)

A. V. STUART

Softly, Softly! Sings the lofty rock unto the skies its psalm.
I was young, but now am hoary, tired with my long pilgrim story,
Poor, yet sated with earth's glory, know I yet, wherefore I am?

Softly, softly! See, the rock lifts starry edelweiss heavenwards high.
O my heart, impure and yearning, from the vale to the summits turning,
Lo, the Light in Whiteness burning, where I was, ere yet was I.

ELEGY ON A POET'S DEATH

FOR D.T.

D. S. THOMAS

The fingers that composed the world at sunset
have formed their last descriptive skyward pattern,
now, for the first time, blindness takes
the eyes that balanced the colours of the clouds,
nor is there any arbiter of that strange battle
waged upon a lonely coast
to and fro between the sea and rock,
none but the hollow commentary of the crying gulls.
And the fields and the mountains that rolled for him
beneath an ever-changing sky
now lie quiescent.

Yet from the dead his voice is heard,
the voice that called to rising cities
and to falling generations.
For he, like a pied piper in array
led with his music the themes of language
out from the city in the damp and the greyness
where unmarked midnight passes
in the smell of railway sidings and bridges
and the night is never light.
It was then that he showed them
the seven stars of the seven hills
and the seven rivers of the plain
and all more wonderful than anything across the sea,
for he has called the world with his music
and though there were no music it would hear.

ROBERT FROST AT HOME*

MARC T. GREENE

Driving along a New England road in the back country, one of those roads that seem to lead straight into yesterday, we pass resoundingly through an ancient covered bridge. Then, ascending gently through lush pastureland, we reach the top of the slope.

> The road at the top of the rise
> Seems to come to an end
> And take off into the skies.
> So at the distant bend
> It seems to go into a wood,
> The place of standing still
> As long as the trees have stood.

We pause as a countryman comes ambling out of a side lane. 'Does Robert Frost live somewhere about here?'

He ponders, 'What's that name?'

Ah well, the prophet in his own country again. 'Robert Frost, the famous poet.'

'Hm-mm. Seems to me there's a fellow of that name 'round these parts somewheres. Don't rightly know what he does for a livin'. Got a cabin in back there yonder.' He gestures vaguely. 'If I was you, I'd take the first turn to the left, then next but one turn to the right, then – well, 'bout there you'll find, prob'ly, a farmhouse. Likely they'll know just where 'tis your man lives.'

A typically non-committal Yankee. A Yankee in the State of Vermont, where Rudyard Kipling married and lived. One who is not too sure of the identity of the man being sought, uncertain of his abode, and therefore anxious not to lead the questioner astray . . .

However, the farmhouse is eventually discovered, and a hail produces a young woman in dungarees.

'We are looking for Mr. Robert Frost.'

'He's in his cabin, up yonder. You can just see it. That path'll take you there.' It ascends gently two or three hundred yards, along the edge of a green meadow, thick woods on the other side. It turns through a stone fence to terminate, in a corner of the meadow, with a simple unpainted cabin – the home of Robert Frost!

There is a screened-in porch. Finding the door bolted on the inside, we assume the owner is within. We rap. No sound for a minute or two. Then: 'All right. Be out in a minute.'

If we had any doubts of our reception, recalling certain experiences of the past when appearing unannounced at the abodes of the famous,

* The October–December number of *The Poetry Review*, 1953, was 'dedicated' in homage to Robert Frost.

the friendliness, the – how shall we put it? – simplicity of the voice, reassures us at once. Certainly it is the voice of 'a friend to man'.

Robert Frost appears, throws open the door, smiles, stands aside for us to enter. 'Do come in! Good of you to call.' He means it, no doubt at all of that. He is attired like any farmer of the neighbourhood engaged in the day's work – dungarees, open shirt, black woollen stockings. 'Mislaid my slippers somewhere,' he explains. 'Find 'em in a minute.'

A splendid dog, apparently a blend of English sheep and collie, emerges, yawning, from under a table. Reassured by his master's greeting of us, he, too, advances with friendly intent.

The poet is tall, ruddy-faced, grey-haired, alert, youthful of demeanour. Seventy-five by calendar reckoning, he is a convincing manifestation of the fact that 'age' is not to be measured by such standards.

'Still play my game of tennis now and then,' he says, with a twinkle in his keen eye, when we congratulate him on this. 'Not quite Wimbledon form, maybe, but not too bad. Take this chair.' He sweeps some newspapers and magazines to the floor from the seat of an old rocker. Then, having recovered his slippers, he drops into a chair opposite and contemplates us with a half-quizzical suggestion of inquiry.

Thus Robert Frost at home! A home of a simplicity that declares the character of the man himself, this man who has known the homage of the world, who holds sixteen university degrees, including Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Pennsylvania, Columbia, Dartmouth and Colorado, who has been awarded the Pulitzer Prize four times, the medal of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and been honoured with innumerable fellowships, university Chairs of this and that, and many another recognition of what the American author and critic, Mark van Doren, lately called 'the greatest art in American literature'.

Here among the lovely Vermont hills he lives unassumingly through the milder part of the North American year. He owns the surrounding property, a fine New England farm of four hundred acres. 'Technically,' he explains, 'I am a farmer.' Indeed, that is the 'occupation' he gives in *Who's Who*. 'I have also cobbled a bit upon occasion.'

He does other things, among them the editing of small-town newspapers and teaching school. In these days, before and after his months in Vermont, he lectures in various colleges, and to cultural societies. He spends most of the winter in the warmer South, but he moves about a great deal. 'The main thing,' he says, 'is to have an interest, something always ahead of you'.

But for a place to live in, actually to *live*, Robert Frost always goes 'north of Boston'. He finds inspiration, even exaltation, in the

eccentricities of northern New England weather, the changeableness, often day to day, as in old England, of a low-pressure region: the invigoration of the cool north-westerlies after a period of hot mid-summer sun. But he likes most to return in springtime.

'You know how it is with an April day
When the sun comes out and the wind is still,
You're one month on in the middle of May.
But if you so much as dare to speak,
A cloud comes over the sunlit arch,
A wind comes off a frozen peak,
And you're two months back, in the middle of March.'

AGE

JEAN BOWMAN

It is that quality of evening when the shadows
Fall long, and small sounds carry far,
When the sun has left the sky unclouded,
Undimmed, and jewelled with the evening star;
That light, the clear last light of day,
The waiting air of stillness, fragrant, thin –
Age has that pellucid calmness,
A sheath which faintly hides the glow within.

It is the eye that looks with gentle pity
On the youth it was: accepts the year's release;
The warm and tender heart, whose pilgrimage
Of joy and sorrow has attained its peace;
The courage to look backward without flinching,
The wideness of a vision, clear and confident
To look upon its memories, and leave them
Safe within a tranquil mind, and rest content.

It is the pause where night has made its compass,
Where the stars have come full circle on their way;
It is the doffing of the years, as morning
Slips from darkness, the expectancy of day.
It is the deep, quiet breast where comfort lives,
The sympathy by long use selfless made;
It is the crowning of youth's fearlessness,
The proved, the wise, serene, the unafraid.

GALATEA

ALUN LLEWELLYN

No where,
  wherever beauty's found,
  can it compare
with her in loveliness; no sound,
no sight, not all the senses tell
of what can be her parallel.

No word
  can in its compass hold
  the thoughts half heard
wherein her tale of beauty's told,
which goes beyond the stretch of speech
where divination cannot reach.

In her
  such beauty lives as may
  in secret stir
within the stone, until one way
only, the sculptor's hand shall take,
he knows not how, yet sees it wake.

'IN THE COMMERCIAL WORLD'

K. J. D. SMITH

I will go from this place,
Before my mind and body go
Screaming down the road to hell.
I will seek a ruin that was once an abbey.
And there my soul shall cry in peace.
I'll lay my body on the grass,
Till it shall pass into a dream,
Where its loves and thirstings lie
Caressed by the murmuring wind.

For the lost instincts creep in dark gutters,
And I must go to a ruin'd castle in the hills
Lest the vision of purity be destroyed in revenge,
The revenge of the imprisoned beast
Upon its iron master,
While the soul weeps and weeps,
Murdered.

RAIN

JAMES HARRISON

Rain
Running down the cobbled street
Like the sound of children's feet
Coming back from school;
Tapping on the window-pane,
Glad to be home again.

IRELAND

BRIAN CLEEVE

I am the woman Ireland,
Beautiful my face;
White as the bright moonlight,
Bright as the white race
Of water over rocks,
Torn-tumbled, silver lace,
Where the salmon leaps
In silver archways
Bow-strung up the falling water's face.

I am the woman Ireland,
Dark my hair:
Black as the shorn birch trees,
Wild as the torn air
Of winter winds,
Rain-sharpened, wolf-hound spare,
Running their supple sinews in the heather
To cry their sorrows in the grey wolf's lair.

I am the woman Ireland,
Soft my breast;
Tender as sorrow weeping
For its hurt holiness;
Strong as prayer
Heart-wrenched, torture-pressed,
Each breath mourning a son-lover
Slain in bridal dress;
Victim on the green hill-altar of my breast.

JOHN LEYDEN – THE PARADOX OF GENIUS

ALEXANDER BUIST

The story of John Leyden, son of a Roxburghshire shepherd, is a tragic one, but not uncommon. It is the story of a 'lad o' pairts' who sought after learning in all its forms and burnt himself out practically in the process. In a memoir of Leyden, published in *The Edinburgh Annual Register* shortly after his death in 1811, Sir Walter Scott records a favourite saying of his about the acquisition of knowledge: 'Dash it, man, never mind; if you have the scaffolding ready, you can run up the masonry when you please.' Easy enough, perhaps, for this ebullient, harsh-voiced Borderer, of portentous memory and immense application, who took the drawing-rooms of cultural Edinburgh in his stride, and absorbed languages – his biographers credit him with at least forty-five! – as readily as does a cat her daily ration of milk.

But as far as John Leyden's poetry is concerned, we have a certain sympathy with a criticism in *The Scots Magazine* in which the writer suggests that he was a poet 'because Scott and Campbell and others of his associates and contemporaries were poets, and Leyden was not a man who would be willingly outdone in anything.' Much of it, in fact, is dull, artificial and academic. His 'Scenes of Infancy', for example, a long, nostalgic, narrative poem, was created, or rather, pieced together, from earlier material, on the eve of his departure in 1803 on Government service to India. It is seldom lyrical; in essence a *tour de force*, a sentimental parade of book-lore, turgid, discursive, allusive. History is ransacked, and local tradition expanded; the Teviot and its tributaries, the Ale, the Kale, the Borthwick, the Slitrig, are classicalized; the language is ponderous and conventional; the natural scene remains a frame for the picture of human action and reaction, and only rarely becomes a theme in itself.

Leyden's extraordinary 'gift of tongues' proved his undoing as a poet. He was, quite literally, 'inebriated with the exuberance of his own verbosity', choosing as his ultimate creative sphere the limitless tracts of philology in preference to the necessary self-discipline of verse. Little wonder that towards the end of his short life he found himself a spent force. He spoke, surely, his own epitaph during a period of serious illness in his early days in India, when, propped on pillows, he persisted in working ten hours a day against doctor's orders: 'I cannot be idle; and whether I die or live, the wheel must go round to the last.'

During his eight years in the East, he was doctor, naturalist,

professor, judge, commissioner, translator of the Gospels into various Oriental dialects, Master of the Mint, and interpreter. He accompanied the British expedition against Java, then held by the French and Dutch, and died of fever a few days after the capture of Batavia as the result of entering a long unventilated house, which he had heard contained some interesting books and manuscripts. He is buried in Batavia beneath a square stone slab, elaborately and conventionally inscribed, and the house where he died was bought by the Dutch Government about half a century ago, to be preserved as an example of the architectural style of the period. His Oriental manuscripts, and the manuscripts of his later poems, were acquired in 1824 by the Board of Directors of the Honourable East India Company, and are now in the library of the India Office. One cannot help wondering if they are ever consulted.

It is on his position in the literary life of Edinburgh at its zenith in the last decade of the eighteenth century, and in particular on his association with Sir Walter Scott in his compilation of *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, that Leyden's reputation chiefly depends. This unpolished and unruly but galvanic countryman who had failed to obtain a pastoral charge through a deficiency of manner rather than of matter and who on occasion was prepared to resort to physical violence in order to clinch an argument, compelled a surprised attention among genteel gatherings on the south side of the capital. He met Scott originally through Richard Heber, a brother of the Bishop and hymnologist, and himself a bibliophile of discrimination. At the turn of the century Scott had not yet come into the limelight as poet or novelist. Leyden was the friend of Horner and Jeffrey, of Brougham and Campbell, of Constable and Sydney Smith, and already a regular contributor to *The Edinburgh Monthly Magazine*, largely of translations in half-a-dozen languages. He had composed at least four ballads, unstilted and displaying a lively imagination, 'Lord Soulis', 'The Cout (Colt) of Keilder', 'The Elfin King', and, best known of all, 'The Mermaid', founded upon a Gaelic traditional ballad, 'Macphail of Colonsay and the Mermaid of Corrievrekin', the latter a whirlpool or tidal race lying between the Hebridean Islands of Jura and Scarba.

Leyden composed 'The Mermaid' after a tour of the Highlands and Western Islands in 1800, and Scott refers to it in his *Lord of the Isles*:

> Scarba's isle, whose tortured shore
> Still rings to Corrievrekin's roar,
> And lonely Colonsay:
> Scenes sung by him who sings no more!
> His bright and brief career is o'er,

And mute his tuneful strains;
Quenched is that lamp of varied lore,
That loved the light of song to pour;
A distant and a deadly shore
Has Leyden's cold remains.

At that time Scott was Sheriff Substitute of Selkirkshire, and in company with Leyden he made a detailed tour of the outlying parts of his literary domain, in particular Ettrickdale and the wild, lonely hill regions around St. Mary's Loch. There they met and held profitable converse with James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, then emerging from poetical obscurity. Hogg also did posthumous honours to Leyden in a short poem which ends:

Leyden, a shepherd wails thy fate,
And Scotland knows her loss too late.

Leyden, as a fellow Borderer, entered upon so congenial a task as the search for ballads with characteristic zest and tremendous physical energy, and Scott recalled: 'An interesting fragment had been obtained of an ancient historical ballad, but the remainder, to the great disturbance of the Editor and his coadjutor, was not to be recovered. Two days afterwards, while the Editor was sitting with some company after dinner, a sound was heard at a distance like that of the whistling of a tempest through the torn rigging of the vessel which scuds before it. The sounds increased as they approached more near, and Leyden, to the great astonishment of such of the guests as did not know him, burst into the room, chanting the desiderated ballad, with the most enthusiastic gestures, and all the energy of the *saw-tones* of his voice already commemorated. It turned out that he had walked between forty and fifty miles, and back again, for the sole purpose of visiting an old person who possessed this precious remnant of antiquity.'

Even as a boy Leyden had walked many miles, in winter, from Henlawshiel, his second home, under the shadow of the 'tawny wild' of Ruberslaw, with its Covenanter traditions of heaven-sent deliverance from arrest by scouting Dragoons. His sole object had been to borrow a unique copy of *The Arabian Nights*; a title prophetic, perhaps, of his future career. The owner, a blacksmith's apprentice, at first refused the loan, but Leyden waited on till evening, and eventually carried off the book as a present! It is also recorded that while he was preparing for his entry to Edinburgh University with the minister of a parish two miles from his later home, his father proposed to provide him with a donkey for purposes of transport. But in fear of ridicule, he refused the offer, until it was fortified with the addition of a book entitled, again perhaps prophetically, *Calepini Dictionarium Octolingue.*

One feels, instinctively, that this Scott-Leyden association must

have been a somewhat precarious affair, with Leyden enthusiastic, but loud-voiced, over-confident and rumbustious, a trifle over-conscious, perhaps, that it was he who conferred the favour; Scott, generous and gentlemanly as always, bestowing honour where it was due, and sometimes where it was not. As might be expected, Lockhart, in his *Life of Scott*, comments disparagingly on Leyden's appearance and character, and stresses the 'poor student' aspect of the relationship, which, as already indicated, was by no means evident. That Leyden was aware of his personal shortcomings, is made clear by Lord Cockburn who quoted him in *Memorials of his Time:* 'I often verge so nearly on absurdity,' said Leyden, 'that I know it is perfectly easy to misconceive me, as well as to misrepresent me.' With a naïve sincerity, he had to voice openly his belief in himself, as it might be in a third party, that nothing was beyond his powers. Yet, in the main, his was an amiable vanity.

When all is said and done, it is the irony of the personal situation that strikes us most forcibly. Scott, with a quantitatively more limited repertoire, has carved his niche among the immortals, while Leyden, with his vast industry and colossal output, his restless striving for new worlds to conquer, survives only in two or three local memorials. The cottage in the little village of Denholm, his birthplace, near Hawick, has been re-thatched and done up, and in 1898 a plaque was inset in its frontage by *The Edinburgh Borderers Association.* The village green is disfigured by a miniature Albert Memorial, with a quotation from Leyden's 'Scene of Infancy' on one side and Scott's lines on its opposite. A rough stone obelisk by the roadside marks the vacant site of the farm of Henlawshiel, with its fair prospect of a section of the Teviot valley, and of the Eildon Hills to the north. The rather unusual surname of Leyden has vanished entirely from the neighbourhood.

To the end of his days, Leyden retained the four-square solidity of his rural up-bringing; throughout his varied career in strange surroundings, he displayed both courage and initiative; he was never spoilt by success, never giving himself time to become so. One of his most endearing traits was his unvarying love and thought for his family, especially for his father, to whom he always remembered to remit a fixed sum at regular intervals, and to whom he never, for the shortest period, owed a penny, except £40 to cover the first two terms of his University career. Yet men as diverse in public achievement as Scott and Lord Minto, Constable and Cockburn, Hogg and Sir Stamford Raffles, recognized his intellectual quality and the individuality of his character, and paid sincere and affectionate tribute to his memory. His love of his native Borderland best appears in a lyric, one of the most unself-concious he ever wrote, 'tossed off'

in a spare half-hour in reply to his friend, Sir John Malcolm, of the Indian Political Service:

Bred mid the heaths and mountain swains,
Rude Nature charmed my early view;
I sighed to leave my native plains
And bid the haunts of youth adieu.

Soft as I traced each woodland green,
I stretched its charms with parting hand;
That memory might each fairy scene
Revive within this Eastern land.

Careless of fame, nor fond of praise,
The simple strains spontaneous sprung,
For Teviot's youths I wrote the lays,
For Border maids my songs I sung.

Enough for me if these impart
The glow to patriot virtue dear;
The freeborn soul, the fearless heart,
The spirit of the mountaineer.

Torn from my native wilds afar,
Enough for me if souls like thine
Unquenched beneath the Eastern star
Can still applaud the high design.

Leyden's life is not a 'success story' by the standards of modern journalism. It contained most of the necessary ingredients, but his temperament, his very versatility, perpetually stood in the way. At least he has made a lasting contribution to the rich storehouse of Scottish legend and chivalry.

AUTUMN IS A HALF-WAY HOUSE

RITA SPURR

Autumn is a half-way house
Between the sun and moon,
The sun of all glad memories,
The calm repose of noon,
Resolving in tranquility
The fruitful summer's boon.

Autumn is a half-way house
Where travellers may rest
And feel the warmth of recent hope
A stronghold in their breast,
Wherewith to face the sudden storms
Of winter's secret quest.

IN A TROPICAL FOREST

RAYMOND TONG

Deep in this forest's primeval innocence,
where Time is lost in green philosophy
that knows no change, the past and future seem
to wear a mask of kindly reticence,
while the present hears no more of history
than it can learn from silence and from dream.

Beneath the grandeur of these giant trees,
by this impenetrable wall of green,
humanity contracts to its true stature,
and we forget our world that's ill at ease,
our world of *maybe* or of *might-have-been*,
dwarfed by the immense frugality of Nature.

THE SWAN

A. V. STUART

(From the French of Sully Prudhomme)

Noiseless the moving swan, reflected in the calm
Deep water of the lake, drives with each wide webbed palm
The wave apart, and glides. The down on his flanks is one
In whiteness with the snows that melt in the April sun;
But even more densely white, and ruffling in the breeze,
His great wing bears him on like a slow ship o'er the seas.
The lovely line of his neck above the reeds he will rear,
Plunge it, turn it about along the waters clear,
A gracious curve like the carved acanthus leaf of the Greek,
Then deep in his dazzling breast he will bury his black beak.
Sometimes beside the pines, where peace broods in the shade,
He takes his winding way, and, trailing the water-weed
Behind him like a long rich train of floating hair,
He goes with his lingering and languid-seeming air.
The grotto whose hushed heart the poet leans to learn,
And the spring forever weeping one who will not return,
Please him: he wanders there; a leaf from the willow tree
In its eddying fall skims past his shoulder silently.
Sometimes he strikes from shore, and steering his superb way

Out from the woody shades to the blue blaze of day,
He chooses, to set off his self-admired white,
The place where the mirrored sun makes a dazzle all of light.
And then, when the waters merge with the margin, all outline lost,
In that hour when every shape is a dim confusing ghost,
When the horizon darkens, with one last red streak of day,
When still the water-flags stand, nor even the rushes sway,
When the tree-frogs sing in the quiet their monotonous tune,
And the lucent firefly threads its spark through the light of the moon.
The bird in the dark lake which, beneath him spread,
Reflects the violet depths of the star-strewn sky overhead,
Like a silver vase in a shower of diamond ornaments
Sleeps, head under wing, between two firmaments.

THE WISHING BOUGH

ODETTE TCHERNINE

Over their heads the wishing bough hung
From doorway garlanded, warm, and bright,
Blood-red holly and mistletoe white,
Emblems of ancient mystic rite
When witches, and druids, and wood-folk sang,
'Under this bough, your wish is in sight!'

Came the first Christmas, and one bright star –
Not here the holly, or mistletoe white;
The Light of the world, so small, shone far
And reached to the deepest forests of night.

The oak said, 'Let the mistletoe be,
And holly gleam red near my darkest limbs,
He that is Light loved all that was made
On the earth, so praise we the whole in hymns.
The druids once came, and high priests may pass,
While strange things are whispered by brushwood fire,
Yet He Who loved the whole world that was,
Would neither burn berry nor twig with His ire,
But say, if the wish be good let it go
And flourish with holly and white mistletoe.'

Over their heads the wishing bough swayed:
They forgot to wish, or – were they afraid?

AUTUMN IN BOUNDARY WOOD

MICHAEL THOMAS

Autumn has tumbled down
to the Boundary Wood;
deep pheasant-coloured, bright
in the waterfall-washed sunlight
of the morning. All through
the cover thick, bramble-damp,
bird-busy wood the world's
bedmaking for the winter.

Time is as short as the shortening
afternoon, when sunset licks
the clouds to a fox-tongue pink,
that fades above the silence of
the fluff-feather, warm fur, frosty,
twig-cracking, listening night.

AFRICAN AT A MEETING

BETTY PARVIN

You were a shadow when you came to stand
Under the garish light.
Out of the cold heart of our English winter,
Out of the night
You came, to hear one speak about your land.

Your eyes were sombre, searching the chilled faces.
Their questing stirred
The frozen memory of guilt inherited
And dulled hearts heard
A slave articulate in subject places.

You were a silent stranger, marking, the while,
How angry words can grip
Our ice-bound race, until his love for your people
Touched your pent lip
Into the flooding freedom of a smile.

ONE HOUR IN SETTIGNANO – ITALY

MARGARET HOWARD

To stand upon that Tuscan hill,
You know why holy men have trod
Among those gilded stones and towers,
So near they are to sun and God.

The honest face of sky looks down,
And in warm silence seems to press
Its magnitude upon the soul,
To shame away all littleness.

You feel the tall Etruscan walls
Forever with such salves were hung;
As still the saint-child's flower-like power
Makes antiquity seem young.

And as I stood that too-brief noon,
High above the dreaming square,
Where all I looked upon was gold,
As if within a lamp's calm flare,

Below me, guided by two nuns,
Came tiny children dressed in white,
A grave and slow processional;
Their great dark eyes as wise as night.

I heard no sound, I only saw
Those figures in a peach-bright glade;
The flutterings on porch and pale
Their angel-pallid shadows made.

Each held a silver crucifix;
Their little chins thus silvered too,
And as each minute form moved on,
It seemed all worthwhile truths they knew.

Simplicity and love and peace . . .
Recalling now that distant land,
It seems those children never stir,
But stay a rosary in Time's hand.

'MY BOOK OF THE YEAR'

AN EDITORIAL SYMPOSIUM

Again the eight worthies who assemble as the Editorial Board of *The Poetry Review* have looked back along the bookshelves of the year. They have lingered over the books they read in 1955, recalling those which impressed them most, and choosing the one (or several) they think of as having left on them the most vital and vivid memory. Without necessarily being prepared to go to the stake for their choice they take turns in naming it here.

KATHLEEN VALMAI RICHARDSON

The lives of men of letters always fascinate me, though I must admit to approaching the prose of contemporary poets with some trepidation. In so much of it the writer seems to be over-anxious to prove his poetic sensitivity rather than to entertain the reader. But Richard Church, in his autobiography *Over the Bridge* (Heinemann, 18s.), paints such a perfect *genre* picture of humble family life at the turn of the century, that for me (as well as for *The Sunday Times*) this is the find of the year. The style is so steady, the characters are so vivid, and the moment when the short-sighted little boy puts on his new spectacles and literally sees the world around him for the first time is so touching, that I hope this child will grow to maturity very gradually and through several volumes.

GEOFFREY JOHNSON

The most rousing book for me has been Stanton Coblentz's *The Rise of the Anti-poets* (Wings Press, U.S.A., 2 dollars), not only for its truth but for its fearlessness, and just when true poetry needs it most. They are all here – the spouters, not singers, who have dominated the band-wagon since the nineteen-thirties, the anthology-racketeers, the ancient-university seducers of youth by meretricious models, the critics who have remained shamelessly silent, or, even worse, who have actually connived for lucre and notoriety with the dragging of poetry into the gutter. The whole of it is aflame with something of Sidney's and Shelley's selfless fire.

EVELYN D. BANGAY

Several volumes in The Herder Art Series came my way during the year and gave me great delight. They are very different from the usual little books on Art, for the illustrations are gathered from wide and unusual fields and include some lovely pictures of the Renaissance and other periods, carvings from ancient and medieval tombs, altar decorations, pieces of glass-ware, exquisite details of plant and animal life from larger paintings, wood carvings, book and MSS illustrations,

Roman and Egyptian reliefs . . . all fully indexed and described in a commentary not so much for their particular merit as for their spiritual and human inspiration. Originally written in German, they have been sympathetically translated by Dr. Ruth Harrison (Interbook Co., 6s. each).

STEPHEN GRAHAM

Good poetry is still being written, but it seems increasingly difficult to get it printed in book form. The best poem I read last year was 'Ghosts, Fire, Water' by James Kirkup, appearing in the periodical *Nimbus*. The best biography of a poet was *The Solitary Singer*, by Gay Wilson Allen (Macmillan, New York, 8 dollars). It gives a very full account of the life of Walt Whitman. The best novel was *The Reward* by Michael Barrett (Longman, 10s. 6d.). It had no book-club 'recommendation' and was inadequately reviewed, but it is most moving. It could very well have been written as a long narrative poem.

F. PRATT GREEN

The Book of the Year, in poetry, surely is *The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens*. It is so expensive, however (Faber, 42s.), that I am hopefully waiting for my Christmas-book-tokens so that I can buy it. My less extravagant choice is *The Nightfishing*, by W. S. Graham, for the sake of its title-poem, one of the few longer poems of recent years I have wanted to read again and again, both for its technical mastery and for its layers of meaning. Perhaps the holidays I spent in a Cornish fishing-village have prepared me for many vivid images in the poem and for its pervading atmosphere.

The work of W. S. Graham chiefly derives from Gerard Manley Hopkins and Dylan Thomas, the most dangerous influences in modern poetry. By consolidating their gains, and to some extent paying off their losses, Mr. Graham has justified them and himself. I do not think a finer poem than *The Nightfishing* (Faber, 10s. 6d.) was published in 1955.

JOHN GRADDON

I would have chosen the Classic Anthology, defined by Confucius and translated by Ezra Pound as having lasted the years and likely to survive, whatever translations are made in the years to come, but I feel compelled to choose a book with no literary pretensions and with a complete absence of the classical moral precept.

Abbé Pierre and the Ragpickers is a short history of that most remarkable Frenchman since 1947 to 1954, when he publicly invited the Minister of Reconstruction to attend the funeral of a baby who died of cold in the abandoned shell of a public bus in Paris. The Minister followed the baby's coffin on foot, and, as a result, funds were allotted by the

Council for the building of several Emergency Cities. The work of Abbé Pierre with the homeless, the derelict, the rogue has to be read to be imagined. Let him speak for himself:

> No idealism. God is not in the sky . . . Christ is incarnated in this tramp, this thief, this liar. The glory of God is incarnated in you who read, in me who am speaking . . .
>
> Certainly we are not angels here. But who can tell whether perhaps more than one of us is not on his way to becoming a saint . . .
>
> One of them is here because he was too left-wing; in Madrid he would have been shot. Another came because he was too right-wing; in Prague he would have been hanged. Anywhere else but here they would have slit each other's throats consciously and willingly. Here, faced by a family out in the cold, they say: 'Father where are the bricks?' . . .
>
> The only community service offered to the youth of to-day is military service . . .
>
> Here we live in the infallible. In military matters, in political matters, left or right, one is obliged to admit (unless one is an idiot) that 'in this or that I made a mistake'. But when you are building houses for mothers who are sleeping in the open, then you know you can't be wrong . . .
>
> Restore to man his dignity. Herein lies the great secret. Without this not one of the ragpickers could do what he does, could live in primitive conditions in the garbage dumps.

KENNEDY WILLIAMSON

It is true of some books that they repay a second, more than they invite a first, reading. Some books, of course, do neither. A few – a select few – invite a first reading and also repay a second. In this group comes *The Magic Stone*, by Geoffrey Johnson (Robert Hale, 7s. 6d.). His poems are without tonal ugliness, or eccentricity of shape. The reader never feels that the reaction aimed at is 'What a remarkable person this poet must be!' but 'How true, how profound, how beautiful these conceptions are!' A world in which a book like this can be published and find a public, has a sanity after all.

THOMAS MOULT

Albert Schweitzer's autobiography: E. P. Thompson's study of William Morris: and Richard Church's *Over the Bridge*. Here are three books which stand as the best-remembered in my year, and if I must prefer one of them I do so only to fit in with editorial requirements. Dr. Schweitzer's *My Life and Thought* is a new edition (originally published 1933, Allen and Unwin, 12s. 6d.) and *Over the Bridge* has been chosen by another contributor to this causerie. Therefore I am left with *William Morris, Romantic to Revolutionary* (Lawrence and Wishart, 50s.), a superb book about the life and work of a Leonardo da Vinci reincarnate – the author of *The Earthly Paradise*, claimed by W. B. Yeats as "the happiest of the poets."

THOUGHTS BEFORE SLEEP

W. H. BOORE

The hour is dark, and I am washed with sleep
As warm as motherhood. And shall I know
A sleep as cold as the lean earth below,
A night as deep as any grave is deep?

When I awake, and the old shadows leave,
Oh, let the day have morning in its light
Its whole length through! And let the newer night
Be not day's ending, but the morrow's eve.

POEM OF SIMPLE MAGNANIMITY

G. RICHMAN

The elephant crashing through dripping jungles,
Making the monkeys hop and the snakes slither,
Sees three plump and evening-suited hunters crouching,
Pauses and, curling his trunk in a question-mark,
(A parrot scratches a floppy ear) says:
'Either I carry on with this life, honest if fierce,
Glorying in sheer colour and bristling tropic sounds,
And probably starve in the end;
Or be shipped splendidly to London,
Live on tuppenny sugared buns,
Carry children on my majestic back,
Ripen to a stout senility.'

Humming a little trumpet-fugue, swinging his hips,
He searches for the hunter's trap,
Lowering himself cautiously down,
Crosses his legs to wait, and makes little castles in the soil.
Eventually the hunters creep out,
Complimenting themselves on their skill
(One stubs out a long cigar),
Tie him up with a hundred ropes
And a ribbon on his tail, saying:
'This gentleman's rather dumb.'

The elephant, being thick-skinned, forgives and forgets,
But on the ship has already forgotten his happy fugues
And learnt dance-hall tunes on bended knees.

THE CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST
OR THE CRY OF A COCKNEY TOURIST

JOHN BAYLISS

This year I 'ad a bonus, so the wife she says to me,
'I'm sick of all them 'olidays a-sittin' by the sea.
Let's go an' see the Continong, the place they always fight on,
An' go an' 'ave a basinful of Gay Paree, not Brighton.'

So we goes an' 'as a look at France, the boolevards an' plarges,
An' we 'as a winter fortnight, though we don't get winter charges,
But there's one thing what I didn't like, nor 'ave since I began:
They 'adn't got a breakfast fer a British working man.

We went to all the night clubs, an' we saw the Moulin Rouge,
An' we drank the bloomin' vino till the Eiffel Tower seemed huge.
Then we went dahn Sahf to plices where the jolly Dockers go,
An' we larfed to think of Londoners in all the fog an' snow.

Yus, I reckon ev'ry second we enjoyed the Sahf of France.
My Missus brahned 'er back with Dooks while I played gaimes of chance.
Yer could s'y the plice was perfect, 'cept for one thing wrong with Cann'.
They never 'ad a breakfast fer a British working man.

Now I'm not a fussy feller, an' I don't mind foreign food.
So long as there's enough of it, I'll even s'y it's good.
But the continental breakfast don't see me through till ten,
An' each d'y it's rolls an' coffee, then the bloomin' sime again.

So I says to 'em quite quahtly on the last d'y we was there,
'You won't find me complainin' when yer calls weak beer *bière*,
Nor when yer s'y *L'addition*, an' I find it multiplied –
We're used to all them larks an' more upon the Other Side.

But if you wants more British tourists, like the Miners an' M.P.s,
It only stands ter reason you must do yer best to please,
An' you'll never get a sausage till you use a fryin' pan,
For yer breakfast just ain't fittin' fer a bloke what's come from Britain –
Yus, it ain't a proper breakfast fer a British workin' man.'

'DEAR EDITORS – '

(The opinions expressed in the following Letters from Readers are not necessarily those of *The Poetry Review*.)

ALLITERATION, ASSONANCE, AND HALF-RHYME

In his final reply about assonance, P. E. Dunn is more or less right. Assonance-rhyming, which is purely vowel-rhyming, should not be confused with consonant-rhyming, which is not always half-rhyming. Internal assonance half-rhyming has for a long time been a frequent device of English poetry; but I understand that the ancient Irish Gaelic poets used this kind of half-rhyming at the end of lines. The modern Irish poet, Austin Clarke (who is not exactly a disciple of W. B. Yeats) has imitated it copiously in many of his original English lyrics. But the peculiar feature of some of Wilfred Owen's rhymes is consonantal, in no sense assonantal – borrowed, I have understood, from Welsh poets. For instance in 'Strange Meeting' Owen rhymes *groined – groaned, hall – hell, mourn – moan,* etc. Notice that both the initial and last consonants are the same, but the vowels are quite different. This should be termed alliterative or consonantal half-rhyming. When only the initial consonants are of the same sound it is merely alliteration and nothing more – the chief technical device of Anglo-Saxon poetry. When only the last consonants are the same the effect of such tail-alliteration is hardly more than the effect of head-alliteration, so it is not half-rhyming, but third-rhyming at the most. As I pointed out in my last letter, Yeats's *head – laid, spot – cut* in 'Under Ben Bulben' are practically blank in their effect, because merely tail-alliteration. You must double the consonantal device as in Wilfrid Owen's poem to get a half-rhyme. HERBERT PALMER

WELCOME SMILES

I like the idea of the 'Smiling Muse'. There is a Smiling Angel, I remember, in the façade of Rheims Cathedral.. KENNETH HARE

CONCERNING WALT WHITMAN

I feel that I must, in duty bound to a great, neglected genius, correct some of the unintentional misunderstandings of your reviewer of the new biography of Walt Whitman.

Whitman's early 'moralising', his temperance writings and much of his journalism, were due as much to Quaker influence as to any inborn priggishness. I know of no evidence that his journalistic style was much inferior to that of his contemporaries. I would not call the grave issue of the resistance to the extension of slavery into the new States of The West 'petty political tub-thumping', remembering that Whitman lost his job largely through his devotion to this cause.

To accuse Whitman of formlessness is just not seeing the wood for the trees. The originality or otherwise of his style is quite beside the point. Because a poet chooses not to write in the worn-out, cliché-ridden forms of his age, he is no less a stylist in the true meaning of the term.

Finally, there can be no comparison between St. Paul and Whitman. St. Paul's conversion was sudden and complete, Whitman's development slow and tortuous. J. J. HAMILTON

Stephen Graham writes: Mine was not a review of Whitman's poetry but of G. W. Allen's highly documented biography, which I advise Mr. Hamilton to read. It was a surprise to me to read of the young poet's cant and cynicism before he saw the light. I do not think it matters very much: it is the poetry which counts. But it would be a mistake to ascribe it to Quaker influence, which has always been an influence for sincerity. Touching the formlessness of Whitman's verse I wrote nothing against that. I only pointed out it was an unpopular novelty. Only forty copies of the first edition of *Leaves of Grass* were sold to the public.

RECOMMENDATION

I have just been reading a valuable book, *Some Gems of Early Lyrical Poetry*, translated from Old French by Dr. Florence L. Wickelgren (Writers' Guild, 2s. 6d.).

I understand that the author is a member of The Poetry Society, so probably her work is familiar, but the following rondeau by Charles d'Orleans (early fifteenth century) is so apt in view of some of the more obscure poets and writers of the contemporary school that I venture to repeat it below, in case you have not come across it.

O sing whatever's in your thought,
In gentle, free and happy vein
And what is in your heart make plain.
Let not your song be dearly bought;
But freely given and quickly caught.
From all strange fashions please abstain;
O sing whatever's in your thought,
In gentle, free and happy vein.

It has given me great delight as an essay on Clarity versus Obscurity!

RITA SPURR

CART BEFORE HORSE

The following passage is quoted from a prominent weekly: 'It is time for poets to be reminded again that poems are made first by the shaping and ordering of words, and not out of poetic feelings about men or beasts or nature.'

I do not think you could find a better example of putting the cart before the horse. Alas, there are many thousands of poets, both young and old, for whom 'poetry' is just a matter of words. They have discovered how easily 'poetry' is written. Feeling, especially poetic feeling, is for them a handicap. Poetry requires no spiritual equipment, no understanding of Nature, nor knowledge of it. Only talent, a dictionary and a *Thesaurus*. With these he believes himself fully equipped to be a poet. Well, if this is true, the surgeon requires no other hands than the fine sensitive hands of the blacksmith.

Here is a passage from Thomas Love Peacock castigating the poet (and critic) who consider poetry is first 'the shaping and ordering of words':

> 'His cygnet is as white as his swan, his cedar as tremulous as his aspen, his poplar as embowering as his beech. *Thus all nature marches with his mind* . . . an age of liberality, indeed, when not to know an oak from a burdock is no disqualification for a poet.'

BERESFORD RICHARDS

HERITAGE OF POETRY

STEPHEN GRAHAM

Selected Poetical Works of George Meredith, with some notes by G. M. Trevelyan (Longman, 15s.)
Robert Browning, by G. K. Chesterton (Macmillan, 5s.)
Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens (Faber, 42s.)

We are bequeathed poetry from age to age and our accumulating fortune in verse has now become so overwhelming that much of it is lost sight of, or for other reasons cannot be taken up. Wallace Stevens only died last August, and already the testators have delivered to the public 530 pages of collected verse. Browning who died nearly seventy years ago is available on barrows at sixpence a volume. Meredith, although at his death there was agitation to have his body buried in the Abbey, is now obscure and his poetry neglected. It needs the intervention of a leading personality like Professor Trevelyan to rouse the public to what of Meredith it has been missing. He writes in his preface to the *Selected Poetical Works*: 'My object is to enable other lovers of poetry to judge if Meredith can mean anything to them.'

He has brought to our attention some beautiful lines and verses, extracted them, so to say, from the general confusion of neglected literature –

> Last night returning from my twilight walk
> I met the gray mist, Death.

and

> Oh wisdom never comes when it is gold
> And the great price we pay for it full worth.
> We have it only when we are half earth.

Many moderns may glance at this selection and say 'It is not for me.' But there are probably a number of individuals for whom Meredith's verse would prove an elixir if they only could find it amid a wilderness of discarded volumes.

The situation with Browning is different. It is true that three quarters of his life-song no longer sounds in any ears, but a quarter lives and is recited in village halls, intoned by BBC stars and inscribed in juvenile albums. His poetry is not so much bought as remembered, or picked out from anthologies. He lives forever somewhere in undimmed glory, but here he may be said merely to survive. That is a pity because one can be with Browning as with one's first love. Now G. K. Chesterton's study of the poet has been re-issued. I read it fifty years ago when it was first published and looking through it again to-day I realize that it wears well. Some think it the best book by Chesterton. Unlike most books written *about* poetry it is itself literature and can be warmly recommended. It is cheap and therefore accessible to young people whose pocket money is not prodigious. It is to be hoped it will direct them to that treasure trove which lies under so many withered leaves of the twentieth century.

Next on my list which comes not so much by choice as by the urgency of seasonal publications is the collected work of the American writer Wallace Stevens. He has been built up as one of the major poets of our age, and

awarded posthumously the Pulitzer Prize for poetry. Physically he has passed beyond our ken but he has left to posterity a big book in which are stored the ideas and impressions which constituted Stevens. It must mean much more to the Americans than to the British. It represents a development after Carl Sandburg but not as memorable. Both the language and the liberties taken with language are transatlantic. What are we to make of –

> The lacquered loges huddled there
> Mumbled zay-zay and a-zay, a-zay
> The moonlight
> Fubbed the girandoles.

And what would be 'castratos of moon-mash?' There is much to remind us of ''twas brillig and the slithy toves.'

But if we can put on the appropriate melancholy there are many poems which read well; for instance, the one beginning:

> Only the rich remember the past,
> The strawberries once in the Apennines,
> Philadelphia that the spiders ate.
> There they sit holding their eyes in their hands.

Stevens at his best is the puzzled philosopher interpreting American intellectuals to themselves, sowing in fact in rather shallow ground. Who will understand these pages when the present-day 'literati' have passed away?

THE PURSUIT OF POETRY

KATHLEEN VALMAI RICHARDSON

The Fire and the Fountain, by John Press (Cumberlege, 25s.)
The Making of a Poem, by Stephen Spender (Hamish Hamilton, 15s.)
Collected Poems, by William Empson (Chatto & Windus, 10s. 6d.)
The Prometheans, by Alec Craig (Fortune Press, 6s.)
Patmos and other poems, by Robin Skelton (Routledge, 10s. 6d.)
Some Phases of Love, by P. D. Cummins (Macmillan 8s. 6d.)
Not For an Hour, by Lord Gorell (John Murray, 10s. 6d.)

How to get nourishment from reading is a problem in this age of loud-speaking intrusion into our leisure and our working hours, and however avid we may be for knowledge and refreshment, hasty snatches at it in bus or train do not help a sustained effort by an intelligent writer to be matched by the reader. Consequently, there is a demand for collation and predigestion. The first two books mentioned above indicate this trend without pandering to it. Both are creative and provocative, John Press's being an exterior and Stephen Spender's an interior examination of the poetic processes.

The Fire and the Fountain is immensely interesting. All aspects of poetry are discussed and illustrated with wit and imagination. For readers who enjoy sidelights on whether or not poets are or should be mad; their sources of inspiration, stimuli (both books quote Schiller's deskful of rotten apples), imagery, style and penetrating analysis of both classical and contemporary examples; this is a book worthy of all the time they can steal for it.

In Stephen Spender's book of critical essays, the first three chapters are directly concerned with the writing of poetry, and Mr. Spender describes, with humility and a very welcome freedom from that rather nauseating awestrickenness which too often pervades such self-dissection, how his poetry takes shape. His brief flights along the chain-reaction of thought and word will find eager companions among craftsmen. The Young who listen only to latter-day voices may miss the mellowing of this one. 'Housman! Romantic Gold Standard!' they exclaim, pulling out their science fiction, 'No time for that old stuff!' Fantasy may be a bird or a rocket, or the last resource of little minds with an attitude to sustain; if, hoping for grace, we are looking for truth, these books may help us to find it.

But poems are not made from other poems nor from books about poetry, so with Time's (and Space's) wingéd chariot on our heels, we must pursue the quarry live. Among those in the lists are Professor Empson, who wears learning and the traditional forms with a dodgy wittiness, relapsing at last into notes – very necessary at times but among the best in the book; Alec Craig (more notes) who echoes Empson's 'Politics are what verse should Not fly from or it goes wrong' but who nevertheless produces an opening poem which goes well enough without.

The dust cover on Robin Skelton's *Patmos* tells us that the themes here 'concern man's relationship with and perception of eternal truth' and as that is our preoccupation also, we may be a little baffled to find the deep apocalyptic well so dry. Beauty we *can* find in some of the lyrics.

Apart from the lovely first poem, P. D. Cummins's *Some Phases of Love* shows mostly the dark side of the moon while Lord Gorell, who says: 'The fashion is to drool of deadly things,' has lived through many moons and many fashions to retain his own quiet simplicity.

PROSODY WITHOUT TEARS

EVELYN D. BANGAY

Poetry Is Fun, by Ruth Crary (Wings Press, California, 5 dollars)

The title is both provocative and stimulating, and it is the enthusiasm of the author that makes her scholarly book an incentive to hard work. Ruth Crary covers the technical side of poetry, so necessary for the true expression of the poet's thought. She sets out her rules clearly, and her illustrations are chosen from wide sources. It is refreshing to find poems from the best American writers as well as those from the English classics.

Besides the chapters on rhyme, metre and diction, there are others dealing with every kind of verse, from sonnets and odes, through the intricate French forms, to the exacting measures of Greek poetry. An early one discusses limericks and parodies, and is perhaps deliberately placed to act as a lure to the more difficult chapters that follow. The book has the soundness of Dr. Brewer's, but an infectious eagerness replaces his solemn didacticism. Verse writers will find it extremely useful, not necessarily to write by but to measure with after initial composition.

ICONOCLAST AND IDOL

F. PRATT GREEN

The Crowning Privilege, by Robert Graves (Cassell, 15s.)
A Reader's Guide to T. S. Eliot, by George Williamson (Hudson, 15s.)

The Cambridge authorities must have known, when they selected Robert Graves to deliver the 1954–1955 Clark Lectures, that they were putting the cat among the pigeons. We hope they enjoyed the highly-diverting result of this commendably rash action, for the cat was in excellent form and the pigeons the plumpest of their tribe.

In *The Crowning Privilege* Robert Graves has gathered together not only these lectures to undergraduates, but ten equally diverting essays, including his Home Service broadcast on 'The Poet and his Public', and has added, for good measure, sixteen poems. The Clark Lectures are superb entertainment, of the Aunt Sally variety. Whether they are sound literary criticism is another matter. Aunt Sally, though well and truly clouted, bobs up again with an amiable or ironical grin.

After having a smack at such easy targets as Pope, Wordsworth, and Tennyson ('Pope had won his supremacy by blackmail; Wordsworth had won his by climbing on the band-wagon at exactly the right moment and sitting tight; Tennyson won his by industry, sweet persuasiveness, and much the same gearing of his poetic intelligence to national progress . . .'), he proceeds in Lecture VI on 'These be Your Gods, O Israel' to demolish five modern idols: W. B. Yeats ('what tersity, what tensity, what eloquence – and what hard, burnished rubbish!'); Ezra Pound ('remove the layers and layers of cloacal ranting, snook-cocking, pseudo-professional jargon and double-talk . . . and what remains? Longfellow's plump, soft, ill-at-ease grand-nephew!'); T. S. Eliot ('yet he had once been, however briefly, a poet . . . ') W. H. Auden ('he is as synthetic as Milton . . . '); and Dylan Thomas ('Thomas seems to have decided that there was no need to aim at all, so long as the explosion sounded loud enough.').

It will be observed, from these quotations, that Robert Graves now and again hits his target. But one cannot help the deliciously ironical reflection that this energetic iconoclast has himself become, late in life, an idol of the younger generation! He can at least claim, before anyone starts debunking him, to have debunked himself years ago when he tore to shreds his own anthology piece 'In the Wilderness'.

It would be unfair not to confess that between the fireworks one has a clear view of the stars. Every poet, and poetaster, should read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest Lecture V on 'Dame Ocupacyon' and the broadcast talk. Here many hard and wise things are said on a poet's relation to his Muse, on such issues as obscurity, and on poetic technique. In short, I wouldn't have missed this book for worlds.

By contrast, *A Reader's Guide to T. S. Eliot* is a solemn affair. It raises immediately those doubts about T. S. Eliot which Graves brilliantly expresses in a paragraph on 'The Waste Land'. Is it to a poet's credit or discredit, or doesn't it matter, that a poem-by-poem analysis of his work should be needed? There is already quite a formidable array of books and articles

explaining Eliot. Did Milton, one asks, need to be explained? Did the readers of 'Lycidas' require a commentary to tell them what the poet meant by 'the grim Wolf with privy paw' and 'that two-handed engine at the door'? Perhaps, lacking such a commentary, they were baffled; perhaps not. The point is, I think, whether T. S. Eliot can be sufficiently enjoyed and understood without a Guide. Is this book, and others like it, an extra or an essential? As a useful extra I can accept it; as an essential I deplore it.

I would hazard the prophecy that T. S. Eliot will be remembered in centuries to come not for 'The Waste Land' or even for the 'Four Quartets' but for the group of poems published in his middle period, notably 'The Hollow Men' and 'Ash Wednesday'. George Williamson has many interesting and illuminating things to say on these two poems, for which a commentary is not essential.

CHANGE AND INTERCHANGE

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

The Metamorphoses of Ovid, an English version by A. E. Watts (Cambridge University Press, 37s. 6d.)

Poetry and Letters of Early Christian Gaul, by N. K. Chadwick (Bowes and Bowes, 30s.)

The Italian Influence in English Poetry, by A. Lytton Sells (Allen and Unwin, 35s.)

Prose and Poetry of the Continental Renaissance, selected and edited by Harold Hooper Blanchard (Longmans, 42s.)

Metaphysical to Augustan, by Geoffrey Walton (Bowes, 17s. 6d.)

Poetry And Civilization, by George Frisbie Whicher (Cumberlege, 20s.)

An English schoolmaster, Mr. A. E. Watts, has translated Ovid's *Metamorphoses* to provide his scholars with a modern version that would be both literary and readable. The original versification in Latin hexameters of those incidents in classic mythology in which the central character undergoes a transformation is smooth and unbroken almost to the point of monotony, and lacks the strong and varied measure of Virgil. Nevertheless by adopting the heroic couplet Mr. Watts has captured much of the dignity, liveliness and story-telling magic while avoiding the monotony. It is a fine achievement that he should have been sponsored by the University of California with pungent illustrations by Picasso.

Hoping to throw light on the dim fourth and fifth centuries in this country, Miss Nora Chadwick, a lecturer at Cambridge, found much material in France and devoted herself to ancient Gaul in its own right. Her book, which is based on the letters and poems of scholars and ecclesiasts of the period, communicates her own enthusiasm and displays a country in the agony of invasion by Visigoths, Alans, Franks and Vandals. The universities, in particular those of Marseilles and Bordeaux and the cathedrals of Autun, Auxerre and Trier, carried high the torches of classical learning and early Christian thought, and scholars and poets such as Ausonius, St. Paulinus and Sidonius steadied and maintained the trends of culture with salutary influence even on the barbarians themselves. This book is a tribute to their vision, yet I wish that excerpts from their poems could have been included.

Mr. A. Lytton Sells deals with the way Italian poetry of the renaissance, that of Petrarch, Dante, Tasso and many others, inspired our own medieval and Elizabethan poets. It is illuminating to trace, with detailed examples, how particular passages were borrowed and fashioned anew by Chaucer, Wyatt, Surrey, Drayton, Greville and Shakespeare as well as by innumerable lesser men. It was not mere borrowing. The impulse and techniques were modified and modulated, resulting in great poetry and a unique tradition.

In the compass of more than a thousand incandescent pages, the Professor of English in Massachusetts has collected translations from the great works of the continental renaissance, including not only Ariosto and Boccaccio, but also Ronsard, Rabelais, Cervantes, Erasmus, and Montaigne. The accompanying biographies provide further material for detecting the seeds of the contemporary English revival.

Geoffrey Walton enables us to reach beyond the renaissance to the seventeenth century when our poets were acquainting themselves with classical literature at first hand. Mr. Walton, whose analysis and judgement are worthy of his Cambridge mentor, Dr. Leavis, traces a bridge of sensibility and wit, built largely by Jonson, Cowley and Marvell, leading from Donne and the metaphysicals to Dryden and the neo-classicism of the Augustans.

The posthumous essays of the American scholar and critic, Professor Whicher, come as a postscript to this development. It is his theme that since the renaissance scientific rationalism has gradually attained the ascendancy. He pleads for poetry to provide the imaginative symbols by which the hope of mankind may be sustained in face of the blind, headlong onslaught of rationalism. How necessary is his plea!

A PUBLISHER IS A POET

P. D. CUMMINS

Some Poems, by Erica Marx (Hand and Flower Press, 7s. 6d.)

Remembering Poems in Pamphlet, remembering the generous appreciation that Erica Marx has always shown to poets, known and unknown, it is a particular pleasure to pay tribute to her own book of verse. With *Some Poems* Miss Marx immediately establishes herself as a writer of marked originality, and one who has at her command an exciting colour-palette of words.

It is one of Erica Marx's assets that she is capable, not only of thinking, but of feeling and of interpreting the feelings of others. Her two war poems: 'No Need for Nuremberg' and 'To One Put to Death in a Gas Chamber' are most moving. So, too, is 'The Song of Elizabeth Hobson', based on a true and tragic incident, which, to my mind, is the best poem in the collection. Miss Marx makes interesting use of the ballad form, employing it with notable success in re-telling the macabre story of the murderer, Christie; she re-tells it, moreover, with a deep sense of compassion which redeems the sordid theme.

The ballad, however, can easily lapse into bathos; 'Sinister Fairy Tale' is a case in point, and should, I feel, have been omitted. Her book, indeed, tends to suffer here and there from lack of selectiveness, but the overall impression remains one of power, drive and urgency. Erica Marx is a poet of outstanding individuality, a poet, furthermore, who possesses what most of her contemporaries lack: brilliant, almost startling, vitality.

HISTORIES AND ANTHOLOGIES

STUART HOLROYD

Mary Stuart, a verse play by Joseph Chiari (Oxford University Press, 7s. 6d.)

Carnival King, a play by Henry Treece (Faber, 12s. 6d.)

The High Hill of The Muses, an anthology by Hugh Kingsmill (Eyre and Spottiswoode, 25s.)

New Poems 1955, edited by Patric Dickinson, J. C. Hall, and Erica Marx (Michael Joseph, 12s. 6d.)

Historical plays about royalty have a rather limited range of subject matter, and when Mary Stuart says in Joseph Chiari's play, 'I am alone in a storm of greed, graft, and ambitions' she voices also the plight of King Edward II in the play by Henry Treece. But there the likeness ends. Mr. Treece has written a chronicle play, whereas Mr. Chiari has aimed at writing a tragedy, a far more ambitious undertaking.

Tragedy may be conceived as the apotheosis of psychological drama. It carries the onlooker beyond, intellectual identification with the protagonists, beyond emotional sympathy, and induces what can only be described as an aesthetic emotion. Genuine tragedy is therefore never naturalistic. It has a certain austerity, the action moves smoothly from crisis to crisis towards a conclusion which is pre-ordained and the anticipation of which informs every scene of the drama. Mr. Chiari understands all this, having learnt well his lessons from Racine and the Greek dramatists. And yet his tragedy, though structurally faultless and written in accordance with all the rules, does not quite come off. We feel that Mary Stuart never really rises to the stature of a genuine tragic heroine, never becomes the universal symbol of unhappy womanhood the author intended.

Carnival King is written in prose, but it is a tense and flexible prose, sometimes bawdy, often lyrical, and always dramatic. There is much humour in the play, and, in the situation of the cultured, pleasure-loving King Edward II surrounded by philistine, warmongering medieval barons who can prate only of honour and of politics, much pathos.

Of the two anthologies *The High Hill of the Muses* contains Hugh Kingsmill's 'favourite passages from English literature', ranging from Chaucer to H. G. Wells. Such a work would only be valuable if compiled by a man with definite ideas about literature, and strong likes and dislikes. As it is, the book lacks orientation and too many of the standard anthology pieces are included. A serious fault in it is the practice of printing abridgements of poems, often without any indication of the fact that they are incomplete.

This year's P.E.N. anthology, *New Poems 1955*, contains some half-dozen poems which I would care to read again. The others, nearly sixty, though competently written, are undistinguished. The best contributions are from poets who have already proved themselves, namely Cecil Day Lewis, Vernon Watkins, Edwin Muir, Norman Nicholson and Rostrevor Hamilton. Of the younger poets, John Smith, Thom Gunn and Elizabeth Jennings are to be

commended. The innovation of publishing the poems anonymously with a reference list and brief biographical notes about each contributor at the end of the book is a welcome one, enabling the reader to judge each poem on its merits and not on the reputation of the author.

FIVE FATHOMS

GEOFFREY JOHNSON

A Match for the Devil, by Norman Nicholson (Faber, 10s. 6d.)
The North Sea, by Vernon Watkins (Faber, 10s. 6d.)
In Good Time, by Tom Boggs (The Bodley Head, 12s. 6d.)
Poems, by Robert Conquest (Macmillan, 10s. 6d.)
A Gallimaufry, by Nathaniel Micklem (Geoffrey Bles, 3s. 6d.)

Mr. Nicholson's comedy, which was first and successfully performed at Edinburgh by the London Club Theatre in 1953, is also very enjoyable to read. Its rather unsavoury theme, Hosea's wife's redemption from prostitution in the Temple, is sweetened by the Christian insistence on the all-importance of forgiveness. The verbal texture, with much adroit exploitation of biblical imagery and some indebtedness to the manner of Christopher Fry, is lively and engaging.

The North Sea is a happy and admirably close rendering of Heine's two cycles, the *Nordseebilder.* The German text is helpfully printed face to face with the English version. There is some monotony in the ever-recurring sea-imagery, the over-frequent end-stopping and the florid romanticism even of the original, and it would be unfair to ask of so faithful a translator as Mr. Watkins why he has not avoided this. Otherwise, his skill nobly gives the lie to the current assertions that poetry by its very nature is untranslatable: a true poet can translate it, and Mr. Watkins does.

The work of Tom Boggs, who died much too early in 1952, seems to have deteriorated somewhat since his frequent and often striking appearances in Thomas Moult's *Best Poems of the Year* series. His poetry is essentially short, swift and lyrical, that is, intuitive hit or miss. But when the hits do come off, as in 'To a Garden', 'Seventeen' and 'The Common Man', they are as refreshing as a six by Johnny Wardle.

Poems is a first collection that has been widely acclaimed in the reviews that advertise themselves as progressive; some of it won the P.E.N. Brazil Prize and a Festival of Britain Poetry Prize. It is typical of its acclaimers – clever, sophisticated, often brilliant and almost wholly unmoving. Mr. Conquest is a subtle and ceaseless commentator on his aesthetic reactions to picture, poem and landscape, but he is not a creator. What he lacks is feeling.

The least ambitious of these books, *A Gallimaufry,* is in many respects the best. It ranges from excellent light verse, sometimes worthy of Praed and Prior, from tender elegiacs such as the tributes to E. H. W. Meyerstein (first printed in *The Poetry Review*), from scholarly and skilful Latin verse, to spirited versions from Ovid and Catullus, and to closely knit, sustained and serious poems on our present condition. On the surface he appears to be a traditionalist in both technique and religious outlook: the profundity of spirit that everywhere informs his work disproves him to be one in either sense. Readers who have already met his work in *The Poetry Review* will know what is meant.

HEART AND MIND

GEOFFREY JOHNSON

The Tenth Jew, by Fania Kruger (The Kaleidograph Press, 2 dollars).

The Mountain of the Sleeping Maiden and *The Pageant of Man*, by Stanton A. Coblentz (The Wings Press, 1 dollar 75 cents, and 1 dollar).

The Love Letters of Phyllis McGinley, by Phyllis McGinley (Dent, 8s. 6d.)

The Poems of Gene Derwood (Clarke and Way Inc., New York, 3 dollars.)

Fania Kruger's best lyrics sing straight from the heart. The keynote is usually tragic, as it is bound to be in one who up to the age of fifteen saw and shuddered at pogroms and Cossack charges in her native Crimea, and has lived on to suffer the much vaster persecutions of the great and noble race to which she belongs. But she gives no sign of embitterment. Her humanity, her toleration, her faith in the brotherhood of man shine all the purer for the fires of sorrow

Good poetry results from a mysterious fusion of heart and mind, a fusion that distinguishes *The Mountain of the Sleeping Maiden* and the finely sustained epic, *The Pageant of Man*. The first is a rich variety of lyric, ballad, epigram and sonnet; it is perhaps in the difficult sonnet form that the author achieves his most memorable triumphs. A closeness to nature and truth, a closeness that never conflicts with but reinforces his visionary qualities is another characteristic: his eyes are always as much on the stars as on the forest or street. His epic is in rhyme and in four pageants, the Timeless, To-day, Yesterday, and To-morrow and runs to over three hundred pages. The whole is spacious, powerful without bombast, multifarious in its rhythms and the facets of life it glances on. This is a major poem, if anything is.

In contrast it would be unfair to say that Phyllis McGinley is heartless. Her love of children and the true saint are clear evidence against that. All the same her verse on the whole has wit rather than humour; it springs more from the intellect than the affections. Even light verse, such as this is intended to be and no more, must, to be of the first quality, have something of the heart in it. Hood has it, Ogden Nash has it. On the whole this writer lacks it. That this collection has already gone into seven American editions is in itself a comment on the civilization we live in: if this is what the public really wants of the poets, may the Nine Muses help it.

Gene Derwood, who died comparatively young in 1954, was the painter-wife of the writer Oscar Williams. This posthumous collection is the most beautifully produced of the five books and the least satisfactory in content and communication. Here mind has grown so over-intense as to become completely divorced from the heart, mind too that more often than not wanders lost in its own over-elaborated labyrinths. Her great compensating virtue was a life-long reticence to print what she herself felt to be imperfect; the zeal and affection of her friends have led them to disregard it, which is a pity.

KEATS AND WORDSWORTH

EVELYN D. BANGAY

A Study of Wordsworth, by J. C. Smith (Oliver and Boyd, 5s.)
The Spirit of Place in Keats, by Guy Murchie (Newman Neame, 15s.)

The first of these studies is focused mainly on Wordsworth the man and the influences that shaped and changed his philosophy of life and are made evident in his poetry. As we know, Wordsworth had a very definite theory of poetry as 'the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings' and 'emotion recollected in tranquillity', to which he added as a great essential 'the accomplishment of verse'. His rebellion against the conventional 'poetic diction' of his day, his experiment with living language, and his choice of simple country folk for his themes were all part of his democratic principles and are admirably analysed by Mr. Smith in one of his most elucidating chapters.

In spite of a rather ambiguous title Guy Murchie's book also considers the poet's background, but in great detail of facts and dates. Mr. Murchie has made a long and devoted study of John Keats, including pilgrimages to every place where he lived or visited. He gives him his full due of many qualities added to his amazing sensitiveness; and his individual picture of Fanny Brawne and her relationship with Keats is a happier one than that of many biographers.

THE SPOKEN WORD

Robert Burton, the literary authority on Melancholy, robustly affirming that 'all poets are mad', also wrote:

> All my joys to this are folly
> Nought so sweet as melancholy.

Certainly poets if sane, are often melancholy and it is the English tradition to do their work reverence by interring it within the spoken word with sombre gravity.

The following gramophone records of Keats's poetry are continuing the series made under the auspices of the British Council and edited by Patric Dickinson:

> Ode to a Nightingale
> Ode on a Grecian Urn
> When I have fears that I may cease to be *Columbia DX 1925*
>
> La Belle Dame Sans Merci
> Ode on Melancholy
> To Autumn
> On first looking into Chapman's Homer
> Bright Star, would I were steadfast as thou art. *Columbia DX 1926*

The British Council sought for a young man to read these poems. Gabriel Woolf is an actor, twenty-three years old, of great promise. His voice on these occasions has the proper melancholy. When youth reads youth, then solemn intensity becomes quadrupled.

JOHN GRADDON

COMPETITIONS FOR EVERYBODY – READERS AS WELL AS POETS

I - *£100 in Prizes . . .*

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT INTERNATIONAL CONTEST

The Poetry Society has pleasure in announcing a fascinating new *Competition for Poets, Non-Poets, and Readers of Poetry.* Through the generosity of the late Alice Hunt Bartlett, who empowered her Executors to arrange for a number of International Prize Competitions for members of The Poetry Society and their friends, we are able to offer – our record figure so far –

ONE HUNDRED POUNDS IN PRIZES

No prize will exceed FIFTY POUNDS, and none will be less than TEN POUNDS, The qualities required to win are simple: a love of Poetry, a little Imagination, and a Good Memory. Competitors need never have written a line of verse in their lives!

But the would-be winner will be well-advised to join The Poetry Society, because the Competition will continue for several issues. Membership ensures that *The Poetry Review* – or *The Voice of Youth,* the junior quarterly associated with this Contest – is received free each quarter. For details see the cover-pages at the end of this number.

It has not been found advisable at the present moment to inaugurate the series of yearly Anthologies which were first announced in the January–March number, 1954 – contributors please note – and the present Competition takes its place. It is a unique Competition: a long 'poem', not original but invented, built by 'Palgrave Q. Dobree' entirely of LAST LINES FROM KNOWN POEMS. Each line is an authentic quotation, and for the guidance of entrants here is an example. The opening line, 'To those who dwell in realms of day,' concludes William Blake's 'Auguries of Innocence'.

We invite readers everywhere to trace the source of as many lines as possible. The winners will be those who give the largest correct number of sources.

The 'poem' will be completed in three issues. Competitors must retain their lists of sources until the serialization is concluded. Instructions for submitting them will then be published, and, as the Competition is world-wide, ample time allowed for the mailing of entries. Meanwhile, make a note of each source and the number of the line. Each tenth line is numbered alongside. See next page for the first instalment.

LAST LINES

PALGRAVE Q. DOBREE

To those who dwell in realms of day
(Secure from violent and harmful fates
Till all was tranquil as a summer sea)
Sweet angels come and sing thee rest
That may breed true love's delight
Whether it be new, or old
Before the world was made.

Another morn than ours
Might vanish in song
And quiet pilgrimage
By the light of the moon,
Though it were ten thousand mile
From the sphere of our sorrow
And out of the swing of the sea –
Out of the wind's and the rain's way.

The hills slept on in their eternity
Like the swell of summer's ocean
Long after it was heard no more
Or so very little longer,
And the storm has ceased to blow
In the foul rag-and-bone shop of the heart
And the voice in my dreaming ear melted away
Into hopeless, endless mourning
That whistles in the wind.

* * *

What shall, alas! become of me?
Youth's a stuff will not endure:
Fled is that music – do I wake or sleep?
And the green grass growing over me
Void of wishing and repenting?

Was that young faithful heart
I consecrate to thee
In the brave days of old
By the sweet magic of harmonious verse,
The songs that I made for thee,
(Quietly shining to the quiet moon
With something of angelic light
And all beset with flowers)
Come to weep out the night
And, as the stream, with murmur pass
To live and die for thee

And weave but nets to catch the wind,
Damn'd for thy false apostasy
Because I would not dull you with my song
Whose breast hath marble been to me –
Thoughts of a dry brain in a dry season
Of births and deaths and bridal nights
To be lost evermore in the main
Far past the other side of the burning world
You loved when all was young?

When all your world of beauty's gone
(And all the bloom we owe)
Into the grave
With rocks and stones and trees
(With silence and tears
That the heart grows old
Buried in dust, once dead by fate)
And be among her cloudy trophies hung –
Ne'er to be found again
(No more, O never more)
And never more will be
Companions of the Spring,
Spring, the sweet Spring: –
Blind as a worm,
Life is, I think, a blunder and a shame
Which still torments me in day's burning fire
While these cold nights freeze me dead.
'Impossible!' I said
(Hoping it might be so
If you'd quietly died),
'Irreconcilables their treaty signed
And left the thorn wi' me?'

Yet to this shape must all be brought
Ere their story die!
When all your world of beauty's gone,
You can hang or drown at last,
Be reckoned but with herbs and flowers.
We have no time to stand and stare
When leaves fall and old winds come –
All are stoics in the grave
But know not what's resisted
Till all the valleys of the world have been withered away
Within a dream,
And hear no more at all
In a land that no man knows.

It is not safe to know
The unplumbed, salt, estranging sea –
That dolphin-torn, that gong-tormented sea –
The Proud Furies each with her torch on high,
The baleful phantoms underground,
The wind of Death's imperishable wing,
The army of unalterable law,
The surge and thunder of the Odyssey
And chants of victory amid the encircling hounds,
The moon in a silver bag,
The Castle's darkness tattering the night
And opposition of the stars
(The stars in their calm
Glittering magnificently unperturbed –
O how that glittering taketh me!):
To see her redcoats marching from the hill
And nothing permanent on earth
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

Say nay! say nay! . . .
The lone and level sands stretch far away
And the green silent pastures still remain
And hedgerows and gardens and loving human eyes;
But we are exiles from our fathers' land
And twice it is not giv'n thee to be born,
To reach a land unknown
Of the round lovely thoughtful moon,
And say farewell once more
And give the peace of Eden
The eternal reciprocity of tears,
The solitude of those unsounded deeps.

(*To be continued*)

*

II – *A Famous Annual*

THE GREENWOOD COMPETITION FOR 1955–56

The Poetry Society is empowered by the executors of the late Mrs. Julia Wickham Greenwood to offer

A PRIZE OF TWENTY POUNDS

in the Shirley Carter Greenwood Open Competition for the best single poem.

Entries should be addressed 'The Greenwood Prize', 33 Portman Square, London, W.1. Only one poem may be submitted by any one competitor, the length not to exceed 250 lines; no previously published poem may be entered. The full name and address of the author must be given and a stamped addressed envelope enclosed if return of the poem is desired. If a nom-de-plume is adopted, name and address of sender must be given in a closed envelope bearing the pseudonym. The winning poem will be printed in *The Poetry Review* and may be reprinted at the discretion of the Editorial Board, who may also reserve near winners for publication in *The Poetry Review*. Closing date is 31st August, 1956.

III - *From the Polish . . .*

ADAM MICKIEWICZ CENTENARY COMPETITION

Poland's great romantic poet, Adam Mickiewicz, died a hundred years ago. The Poetry Society is able to announce that in commemoration of this notable centenary the Polish Cultural Institute offers

THIRTY GUINEAS IN PRIZES

(three of fifteen, ten, and five guineas) for the best English version of either of the two 'Sonnets' given in literal translation below.

The Editorial Board of *The Poetry Review* will be the adjudicators. The two poems are part of a cycle written during a long journey through the Crimea which Mickiewicz made in 1824, when he was twenty-six years of age, and the spirit of his experience must not be lost in the English rendering. Entries are to be addressed 'Mickiewicz Competition,' The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1. They must bear the names and addresses of the competitors, and received by 15th February this year, 1956.

AYUDAH

Leaning against the rock of Ayudah I like to watch
The foaming billows now pressing into dark ranks,
Now gushing up like silvery snow
Whirling in a million magnificent rainbows.

They crash against the sandbank, break into wavelets
Spreading over the shore like an army of whales,
They conquer the land in triumph and returning in flight
Sweep along shells, pearls and corals.

Likewise in your heart, oh young poet,
Passion often raises a terrible storm;
But when you raise the lute it leaves you unharmed

Escapes to plunge into the depths of oblivion
Shedding immortal songs
Which the centuries will weave into a garland for your temples.

ALUSHTA BY DAY

Now the mountain shakes from its breast its foggy cloak,
In morning prayer rustles the golden-eared field,
The forest bows and scatters from its May hair,
As from the Caliph's prayer-beads, rubies and garnets.

The meadow in flower, over the meadow flying flowers,
Multi-coloured butterflies, like the tresses of a rainbow;
Farther on the locust drags its winged shroud.

And where the bare rock gazes at the mirror of the waters,
The sea boils and, rejected, dashes into new attack;
In its foam plays a light as in a tiger's eyes,
Heralding a severer tempest for the shore;
And on the deep the wave rocks lightly
And in it bathe fleets and flocks of swans.

*

IV – *Members and Subscribers only*

THE PREMIUM COMPETITION

The above competition continues as before with the

TOTAL ENTRANCE FEES AS PRIZE MONEY

which may be won outright by a single competitor or may be divided at the discretion of the Premium Adjudicator. An entrance fee of 2s. 6d. will be charged, and a stamped addressed envelope should be enclosed if a receipt is desired. Competitors must observe the following rules:

1. One poem only may be entered by each competitor.
2. The poem must be typed and no stamped addressed envelope will be required unless a receipt is desired. (See Rule 3).
3. Competitors must retain copies of their poems, as none can be returned.
4. Entries must be addressed 'Premium Competition', *The Poetry Review*, 33 Portman Square, W.1.
5. Each poem must bear the author's name and address.
6. Entrants must be members of the Poetry Society or regular subscribers to *The Poetry Review*.
7. The winner of a full Premium or one who has shared the prize money will not be eligible for re-entry for twelve months.
8. No previously published poem may be entered.

The closing date for the next Premium Competition will be 1st March, 1956.

*

V - *Contest to Come*

THE ALBERT RALPH KORN COMPETITIONS

Another substantial Award will be offered *in our next issue* through the generosity of Mr. Albert Ralph Korn, of New York, well known to Poets and verse-readers as a deep lover of Poetry and a distinguished American.

A PRIZE OF FIFTEEN POUNDS

is the Award. For particulars see *The Poetry Review*, April-June number. This Competition will be for Poet-Members in any part of the world.

CAN WE HELP YOU?

The answer is Yes to any Member who is anxious for the best advice about his or her work. The Poetry Society established a CRITICAL SERVICE some years ago, and writers are invited to make use of it.

Two poems may be submitted for criticism and help, for a minimum fee of 5s. The Charge for the criticism of each additional poem (under 100 lines) is 2s. It is particularly requested that all poems submitted should be typed and that a stamped addressed envelope be enclosed.

LATEST PRIZE REPORTS AND AWARDS

THE MENDIP PRIZE AWARD

STEPHEN GRAHAM

The Mendip prize of four pounds for a lyric on a pastoral theme confined to competitors between the ages of seventeen and thirty has been awarded to Dennis Marshall, of Bacton-on-Sea, Norwich, for 'Daylight'.

The winning verses have life and originality and differ from most of the other entries in not being formal, or a 'still life' in words, or an imitation of a water colour.

Runners-up in this competition were Elspeth Reid, of Woodlands, Northwood, Middlesex, with 'Reflections', and Irene Clements, of The Lantern House, Uckfield, Sussex, for 'Two Seasons'. We hope to publish them in a later number of *The Poetry Review*.

If young people feel something in the English countryside it is right that they should be encouraged to try to express it in poetry. For that reason the generous donor of the Mendip prize has made a gesture fully worth while.

DAYLIGHT

DENNIS MARSHALL

The girl sun jumped from the bed of the sea
folding the waves white, her comb of light
curling the breakers scattering spray.

The tomboy sun scrambles up beaches and cliffs
gilding them golden, flirting, lingering, rambling
through wheatfields swirling like crowds in a hurry,
urging the cloud scuds to court and marry
welded together, lifted, fleeing, dancing.

The noonday sun, womanly mature,
sees romping children slide down patient stacks,
sky spiralling martins, fowls speckling the farmyard,
she hastens dinner, gladdening workmen homeward.

The old evening sun, mellow and aged,
stitches the day's tears, threading
her evening glow across mullioned windows
closed against gnats, the moth and the mouse.

THE ALBERT RALPH KORN COMPETITION

'CLARITY VERSUS OBSCURITY IN POETRY'

F. PRATT GREEN

The Poetry Society is grateful to Albert Ralph Korn for offering such a substantial prize. He will be pleased to know that of the fifty essays submitted on the highly controversial theme of 'Clarity versus Obscurity in Poetry', six were so excellent as to make a choice difficult and that a further nine deserved honourable mention. It is hoped to publish an essay on this subject by a Member of the Editorial Board in a future number.

Unhappily some competitors broke the rules and had to be disqualified. (This, in fact, happened to one of the six: Miss Marjorie Boulton, of Burslem, who went well beyond the word limit.) It was perhaps natural that certain competitors, in writing on this theme, should generate more heat than light. What I looked for was a well-reasoned discussion of the subject, with evidence that the writer desired to receive all that poetry has to offer and not merely its obvious and immediate pleasures. The greater number of the competitors were of the opinion that some obscurity is inevitable in poetry and were agreed what forms of it should be condemned.

A first prize of £10 is awarded to W. R. Latham, of London, for a straightforward, persuasive essay in which everything necessary was said without a wasted word. A second prize of £7 goes to Miss L. E. Craigie, of Armidale, New South Wales, Australia, who after calling herself 'the devil's advocate' proved that she was on the side of the angels; and a third prize of £3 to Mrs. Ilse Zuidema, of Vredehoek, Cape Town, South Africa.

Miss H. M. Wilson, of Oxted, Surrey, is highly commended. Commendation should also be given to the following: Jane Scott Parsons, of Derby; Stanton A. Coblentz, of California; Miss Margaret Paton, of Dulwich; Carla Lanyon Lanyon, of Salisbury; Anthony Elliott, of Everton, Hants.; Miss O. M. Canning, of Norham, Northumberland; W. H. Hamilton, of Insch, Aberdeenshire; Mrs. Rita Spurr, of London; and Marie L. Stout, of Salt Lake City.

I will close with a quotation from George Chapman, used to good effect by several competitors: 'Obscurity, in affection of words and undigested conceits is pedantical and childish; but where it shroudeth itself in the heart of its subject, uttered with fitness of figure and expressive epithets, with darkness will I still labour to be shadowed.'

THE HOWARD PARSONS SONNET PRIZE AWARD : 1954–1955

F. PRATT GREEN

This competition was for a sonnet, Shakespearian or Petrarchan, on any subject. Over three hundred were submitted, from nearly a dozen countries, showing a marked preference for the Petrarchan form. The general level of attainment was good. A few competitors, influenced perhaps by poets who play a game of their own and call it cricket, imagined that any poem of

fourteen lines of any length qualified as a sonnet. Another competitor submitted an excellent thirteen-liner called 'The bees were not told', but it was not clear from the text whether the missing line was due to an error in typing or in mathematics.

I have no hesitation in declaring Mary Jane Ferguson, of Chicago, the winner of the £8 award. It was difficult, however, to decide which of her two sonnets was the better. In the end I chose the sonorously beautiful 'Achilles', with its extremely skilful use of repetition, rather than the other, which was in a lighter, conversational style.

The following are highly commended: Dudley G. Davies, Peter Dunn, Phyllis M. Flaig, B. R. Gibbs, E. S. Goodwill, Carla Lanyon Lanyon, Lynne Mitchell, Margaret Rhodes, Edith Roseveare, and Alwyn Trubshaw; and honourably mentioned: Alex Baird, L. E. Craigie, Michael Ivens, Jean S. Cox, Leslie McRill, Edna K. Meudt, Mabel Parker, Juanita Peirse, Elmslie Philip, Iris Prestige, Celia Randall, D. E. A. Rash, D. K. Singer, Alan Smithies, and F. K. I. Springett.

ACHILLES

MARY JANE FERGUSON

Knowledge and beauty burn us to the soul.
Where shall we stand and not be hurt with fire,
Being ourselves the offering and the pyre,
Being the axe, the altar, and the bowl?
The clouds drive east and west, the tumbling roll
Of water drowns the sand; but we aspire,
Because our fate is beautiful and dire,
To turn and be consumed and perish whole.
Knowledge and beauty sear us to the bone.
We turn and are consumed and do not pause
In shades or silences of light. We bend
To the intent and lovely flame alone;
Because our fate is cruel and bright, because
Our fate is as we make it, and an end.

PREMIUM COMPETITION REPORT 25

EVELYN D. BANGAY

In this latest Premium Competition most of the entries were very good, making elimination a difficult task. After many re-perusals I decided on two whose lyrical quality drew me back again and again. There were other poems with an arresting philosophy, fine imagery, or a moving note of nostalgia, but those that gave me most pleasure were: 'Dragonfly Moment' by Winifred Kingdon-Ward, and 'A Girl's Hymn of Praise' by Winifred Bourne Medway, the first because of its bright wording that excellently fitted the analogy on which the theme was built; the second because of the

simple charm of its sentiment and treatment, even though a few outmoded devices in the diction had crept in. Miss Medway's 'Hymn' takes the Premium Award (see page 6).

Highly Commended are Mrs. Fox-Hutchinson (Berwick-on-Tweed) for the restrained sense of ecstasy in 'After'; Dorothy S. Howard (Sheffield) for the colour and strangeness in 'Madwoman's Song'; 'John Furnell' (Bournemouth) for the sustained immanence in 'The Shining Thread'; Margaret Rhodes (Guernsey) for the vivid picture of Elizabeth in 'High Dive'; Celia Randall (Co. Down) for the thoughtful reasoning in 'Menace'; and Liam Brophy (Dublin) for a sensitive realization of what was once alive in 'Murdered Music'.

Others commended are Mrs. Ann George-Powell (Leeds), Elizabeth Drury (Newcastle-upon-Tyne), Alexander Sloan (Greenock), Hamish Ness Law (Edinburgh), Mabel Parker (Winsford), Enid Madoc-Jones (Old Colwyn), Vivienne Walden (Bulawayo).

*

PORTMAN SQUARE – CURTAIN UP

Part of the enjoyment of poetry is to know something about the people who make it, and when we can listen to poets talking about poets first hand, we gather flowers not found in books, except perhaps in a more desiccated condition. To open the Winter Season, our President, Thomas Moult, talked of his friend W. H. Davies, 'Tramp Royal'. No gossip column this, but the loving re-creation of a true-born poet's personality. Of two such personalities indeed, since the glow of the dead man lit up the early days of the living one; the mutual adventures among the company of the Georgians; of Sir Edward Marsh, almost the last of the Patrons, who knew not the Arts Council or the Poetry Panel but found for himself poets of promise and helped them to become known. Pamela Corsie read from the Poems with just the right voice, fresh and clear as a Welsh mountain stream.

Audience Night, with Kennedy Williamson in charge, bubbled away to the egg-timer he brought as 'prop' (and 'stay'!). Rita Spurr produced lines extempore:

> But, Mr. Chairman, this I beg,
> As I have passed the stage of egg,
> And in my brain some riches store,
> Grant me, I pray, a moment more!

A Chairman would have to be hard-boiled indeed to refuse such a plea; certainly not the gallant and soft-hearted *chef de cuisine* of this occasion.

On September's first Friday Stuart Holroyd gave a paper of literary excellence on the Metaphysical Poets, illustrated by readings from Donne, Shakespeare, Herbert and others, by June Franklin, David Delaney and John Dodds; and on 7th October those wonderful Beringers, the Sisters Esme and Vera, recited both Gravely and Gaily with effortless mastery. Bouquets verbal and floral, presented by Charles Doran with equal grace, rounded off a memorable evening.

Poems of our Schooldays, arranged by Charles Alexander, reminded us amusingly if painfully of what can be done to instil the horrors of Elocution into children. All the same, some of us wished we could take our medicine again, knowing as we do now that it was wine. Ripeness is all! . . . To celebrate Trafalgar Day, Kelty MacLeod and Wilton Cole gave poems of the sea and its heroes, among them Ruth Pitter's 'The Estuary', a favourite of Miss MacLeod's, Mr. Cole's favourite Kenneth Grahame providing delight and even more than usual admiration for the speaker's virtuosity.

Robert Armstrong, whose lecture on Yeats was also a house-full occasion, contrived to give not only a digest of the poet's life and character, with enlightening

poems, but also a brief outline of Yeats' occult philosophy (with diagram) – no mean feat within the confines of one hour. As Robert Bridger, who sees with every sense but sight, read 'Byzantium' and some of the other short poems, that 'terrible beauty' was born anew.

November 4th's guest of honour, the great painter Sir Alfred Munnings, chaired by *our* painter, John Strevens, shook the night with wonder, not only by his vigorous narrative poems of hunting, ghosts and the Gloucester Spot, but by the virility of voice and gesture with which he delivered them. Between whiles, with delightful informality, he consulted Lady Munnings (and Toby) and Mr. Maurice Codner the portraitist, who sat among the audience. If only he had arrived in a four-horse coach with fanfares! Still, there *were* fireworks blazoning the night sky above the Square.

Details of a programme 'From Bad to Verse', arranged by Charles Doran, stung the gossip-writer of the London *Evening News* into a diary paragraph: 'From the sober windows of the Poetry Society . . . will come the surprising strains of "She was Poor but She was Honest" . . . and other songs known to barrack-rooms' – and they did too, with great effect! The readers were Mary Giles, Michael Howley, Kim Corcoran, Kathleen Richardson and Charles Doran. The following Friday, Stephen Graham, member of the Editorial Board and distinguished man of letters, gave an interesting discourse on Sound echoing Sense – sound sense too; and on December 2nd, member-poets Alun Llewellyn, Rita Spurr and Geraldine Kalka-Cash read from their works as additional and successful illustration of the soundness of traditional principle. Mr. J. M. Purser's earlier evening on Gerard Manley Hopkins was most rewarding.

John Redwood-Anderson journeyed from his Welsh fastnesses to provide a fine evening of his own lyric poetry, assisted by Natalie Moya and Gerek Schelderup: our own poets have been well represented, and notably well supported, this autumn. To close the series, some of the Society's Gold Medallists shared the scene for Christmas in a seasonal programme of charm and splendid diction. They were: Elizabeth Dickie, Romayne Forsyth, Wendy Jubb, Victoria Watts and Vivian Burbury. K.V.R.

ANOTHER YEAR BEGINS WITH GOOD CHEER FROM THE CENTRES

BY THE EDITORIAL BOARD

To our Centres at home and abroad – a New Year greeting! And those members who have still to send a wish to friends and acquaintances cannot do better or more urgently at the present moment in the world's history than write out the old, familiar reminder – see our Contents Page in each number – *Where there is no Vision the People perish.*

If we greet the Poetry Society of Australia first it is not because we are thinking more about the good people whose Centre is in Sydney than about those of Chicago, Toronto, Nova Scotia, Boston, Pittsburgh, Florida, and St. Petersburg – or, indeed, those at home. The reason is that the organization founded nearly two years ago by Miss Imogen Whyse has prospered so remarkably that the news of its present position must, to cheer us all, be posted most prominently.

From a leading but 'unofficial' member the news has reached us. Miss Carol M. Foote, who declares that since she arrived in Sydney from London four years ago she has not been disillusioned once about the enthusiasm for the Arts 'down under', reports that 'the Poetry Society of Australia is now an established part of Sydney life.'

'A visit to Miss Whyse's studio,' she goes on, 'in the heart of the city would delight and surprise the members of the Poetry Society in London! It is there that we have our fortnightly meetings, listening to the interesting lectures she arranges for us – and afterwards drinking coffee and talking informally together. We have a flourishing library of poetry, and a monthly magazine called *Prism*, which consists of poems written by members, also competitions and criticisms. Between the lectures we have plays performed by the Dramatic Group to stimulate outside interest and also raise funds – and also visits from overseas visitors such as Stephen Spender, and recently an evening of English, Scottish and Irish folk songs by Dorothy Odell.

'Last night (31st October) a recording was made of one of our meetings by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. After an excellent talk by James McCauley, members asked questions. The recording will be broadcast between the peak listening-hours of 8 and 9 p.m. – a very exciting thing for our Poetry Society and a further proof of Australia's interest in the art. I might add here that our membership continues to grow, and that we have members in every State.'

Miss Foote concludes that it was really the recording that made her decide to write – 'and I felt sure the Poetry Society in London would like to know of the inspiring developments of the Poetry Society in Sydney.'

Separately, and unaware of the above report, Miss Whyse writes to the President: 'We are having most lovely weather and how I would like to send a few days over to England so that you might bask in it! And I don't know about the world being so dark: I meet such wonderful people, such fine young things who seem to bring light with them. It is the few who cling to ideas of war as a solution to anything, and the utterly selfish who see nothing but their own wants and are blind to the needs of others – only these make the world sad. Man is bound to go forward and I do not believe anything can hold him back – for he has God on his side.'

NATAL AND DURBAN (S.A.)

From Australia, after leaving our congratulations and wishes with Miss Imogen Whyse and her worthy colleagues in Sydney, we cross the world to another continent – South Africa. At a presentation of prizes in their recent competitions, the Director of Education in Natal and Durban, well known in the Arts, paid tribute to Mr. Thomas H. Lawrence's well-established Centre and to The Poetry Society in Britain for their valuable work. 'In an age of science,' he said, 'it was vitally important to hold on to the good things of life,' among which he places Poetry very high. He confessed, moreover, that he had written verse himself, and he urged the recipients of prizes in the Centre's recent successful contests not to be disheartened by what he called 'the heavy hand of criticism.'

Conveying his greetings to 'all the officials and members of The Poetry Society' over here, Mr. Lawrence reports that Miss Jardine is no longer the hon. secretary. The position is now temporary, and if anyone communicates with him at 15 Overport Drive, Durban, Natal, he or she will not be unanswered.

NORTHERN IRELAND

There is still some sea between us as we reach Belfast, where a very successful Centre has just completed its twelfth year. A heartening list of members, well over the half-century, is starred in the Annual Report, and Miss Hettie Haddock concludes a recent account of the Centre's activities with a message that we are happy to quote. After giving the thanks of her Executive Committee to the speakers 'who gave so

HELLENIC CRUISES 1956

Under patronage of the Vice-Chancellors of Oxford, Cambridge and Bristol Universities.

Cruise No. 3 *NORTH AFRICA & GREECE*

22nd March to 7th April, 1956

visiting SARDINIA, TUNIS, DOUGGA, CARTHAGE, TRIPOLI, SABRATHA, LEPTIS MAGNA, CYRENE, PHAESTOS, KNOSSOS, RHODES, LINDOS, LEROS, PATMOS, ATHENS

Cruise No. 4 *GREECE & TURKEY*

5th April to 21st April, 1956

visiting CORFU, CORINTH, MYCENAE, EPIDAUROS, SANTORINI, IOS, PERGAMUM, BURSA, ISTANBUL, TROY, ZAGORA, SKOPELOS, ATHENS, DELPHI, OLYMPIA

Cruise No. 5 *GREECE, TURKEY & THE ÆGEAN ISLANDS*

21st August to 7th September, 1956

visiting OLYMPIA, PYLOS, SPARTA, MISTRA, MYCENAE, EPIDAUROS, KNOSSOS, PHAESTOS, RHODES, LINDOS, COS, HALICARNASSUS, MILETUS, SAMOS, AMORGOS, PAROS, DELOS, SYROS, ATHENS, DELPHI

Guest Lecturers accompanying the Cruises, who will give lectures on board and at the various sites include:

SIR MAURICE BOWRA, O.LEG.d'H., LL.D., M.A., Warden of Wadham College and former Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University. D. L. HALLWARD, Esq., M.A., Vice-Chancellor of Nottingham University. PROF. R. SYME, M.A., F.B.A., Camden Professor of Ancient History, Oxford University. PROF. W. D. STANFORD, M.A., Litt.D., Regius Professor of Greek, Dublin University. PROF. H. D. F. KITTO, M.A., F.B.A., Professor of Greek, Bristol University. J. B. WARD-PERKINS, Esq., M.A., F.B.A., F.S.A., Director of the British School of Archaeology, Rome. DR. D. B. HARDEN, M.A., Ph.D., F.S.A., F.M.A., Keeper, Department of Antiquities, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. F. KINCHIN SMITH, Esq., M.A., Head of Department of Classics, University of London Institute of Education. DR. C. T. SELTMAN, Litt.D., Fellow of Queen's College, Cambridge University, and formerly University Lecturer in Classics. THE REV. GERVASE MATHEW, O.P., M.A., F.S.A., University Lecturer in Byzantine Studies, Oxford. THE RT. REV. THE LORD BISHOP OF EXETER, D.D., M.A. PROF. T. B. L. WEBSTER, M.A., F.S.A., Professor of Greek, University College, London. SIR JOHN SHEPPARD, M.B.E., M.A., Litt.D., LI.D., Senior Fellow of King's College, Cambridge.

PRICES FROM 80 GNS.

(Students 65 Gns.)

for full particulars and reservations apply to:

W. F. & R. K. SWAN LTD

8 (HZ) Great Russell Street, London, W.C.1

Telephone: MUSeum 3506 (5 lines)

generously of their time and knowledge to further the aims of the Society in Northern Ireland and to Mrs. Winifred Connor for lending her house for rehearsals,' she writes: 'Our President has said that the object of our Society should be to make ourselves and others more sensitive to beauty in life and literature. Let us therefore enter the new session fully resolved to extend the influence of our Society with every means in our power.'

An anthology of Humour, arranged by Elizabeth Lindsay, a Talk on Byron by J. Nelson Browne, a reading of Christopher Fry's *The First Born* – producer, Helen Shaw, and another 'anthology' – of American Poetry – arranged by Miss Hettie Haddock: these have comprised the autumn syllabus. A 'Brains Trust', a Junior Members' programme, and a Talk on 'The Nature of Poetry' by R. N. McNeill are announced for 9th January, 20th February, and 19th March respectively (Kensington Hotel, 22 College Square, 8 p.m.). Miss Haddock, 18 Ashley Gardens, welcomes enquiries.

ST. JOHN'S WOOD, LONDON

Salute to our latest Centre! Miss Henochsberg, 15 Clifton Court, N.W.8, will answer communications about the future of a group originally comprising Lady Macarthur, Mrs. Cundell, the Misses Frankel and Hewson, in addition to the hon. secretary *pro tem*. We at headquarters offer our best wishes and, of course, any possible assistance.

SUFFOLK

This East Anglian Centre seems to have a favourite 'pub' – The Butt and Oyster, at Pin Mill, on the banks of the River Orwell. We are judging, of course, by the frequent meetings they hold there. For instance, in September, Miss Irene Brent, gifted friend of The Poetry Society everywhere, gave a delightful reading entitled 'New Note', including poems commemorating Battle of Britain Sunday – 'which Sunday it was.' writes Miss Kay Turner, the hon. secretary, from 1 Willoughby Road, Ipswich.

In October the meeting-place was again The Butt and Oyster. With the chairman, Mr. F. H. A. Engleheart presiding, Mr. P. T. O'Donnell, of Orwell Park, gave a reading of his own poems. After tea the first ten poems chosen by the judges among the entries for the George Crabbe competition were read. At this meeting, the last of the season's out-of-town gatherings, a brief silence was observed in memory of a valued member, Miss E. Dawson, of Boxford.

WALTON AND WEYBRIDGE

That well-remembered 'Georgian' poet, Wilfrid Gibson, must be greatly heartened in his presidency of this Centre by the enthusiasm and devotion of Mrs. Elsie M. Gittens, the hon. secretary – 28 Oatlands Drive, Weybridge – and her colleagues. They branched out in September with a play-reading (*The Merchant of Venice*), and later in the season a talk was given on the poet Rainer Maria Rilke. In October Miss Mary Storer spoke movingly about her brother, Edward Storer, late of *The Observer*, London, who, it was learnt, once edited a school magazine at St. George's College, Weybridge.

TORONTO (CANADA)

A welcome visitor to one of the Portman Square Readings during the past year was Mrs. Lilian S. Auty, a vice-president of the Pen Guild Poetry Group away in Ontario. Back home Mrs. Auty writes: 'If any of your members, or members who are affiliated with *The Poetry Review* or *The Voice of Youth*, are in Toronto, we hope they will visit some of our meetings. I can assure you they will receive as warm a welcome as I received from you in England.'

NOWADAYS, when the problem is to find buyers for a volume of poems, it is rare indeed for a publisher to be meeting a positive demand. Yet that is what has happened with *The Witnesses* by Clive Sansom. It won a prize from the Arts Council and immediately attracted attention because of its directness and the vigour of its characterisation. The Guildhall School of Music and Drama have asked for it to be reprinted and it has won great favour among verse speakers. These tributes are a sufficient testimony to its clarity at a time when much poetry is said to be difficult. With the title poem are a number of poems which Mr. Sansom has written since. 8*s*. 6*d*.

The Witnesses and other Poems

By Clive Sansom

Methuen

THE SOURCE

and Other Poems

by

KATHERINE WATSON

This first book, by a poet of unusual promise, is a collection of intensely personal confessions. They are written with deep religious and mystical feeling, with exhilarating urgency, and with an eager delight in nature and the beauty of words. They will be read with a growing excitement and admiration.

8*s*. 6*d*.

Oxford University Press

It *can* be published

A new and unique service is offered to poets – we will print and publish their work on a shared-risk basis, the printing being done at half-price – or less if the work is of unusual merit – and the profits on sales being shared.

Send MS. for ***free*** quotation and full details. You will be under no obligation.

P. R. MACMILLAN
(Poetry Publications),
24 Station Road, Cambridge.

Finally, here is a list of Centres in addition to those already mentioned:

BELFAST

Meetings monthly, Kensington Hotel, College Square, Hon. Secretary, Miss Hettie Haddock, 18 Ashley Gardens.

BOSTON (U.S.A.)

Mrs. Blancee T. Bigelow, hon. secretary, 163, Eliot Street, Milton 87, Mass, U.S.A.

BRIGHTON

Mr. P. E. Dunn, 84, Eldred Avenue, Withdean, Brighton 5.

BRONDESBURY

Readings on the first Sunday of each month at 1 Mowbray Road, N.W.6, at 4 p.m. Details from Miss Silvia Newton, L.R.A.M., at the above address.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Enquiries to Mrs. Van den Bergh, Little Basing, Bray, Berks. Meetings every second Saturday.

BURGESS HILL

Meetings second Saturday in each month at Mrs. Lambert's restaurant, 45 Church Road. All enquiries to Miss K. G. Boycott, 'Twemlow', Jane Lane, Burgess Hill, Sussex.

CHICAGO (U.S.A.)

President: Ruth Crary Clough, St. Clair Hotel, Chicago 11, Ill.

DUMFRIES

Mr. Irving Miller, 35 George Street, Dumfries, will answer all enquiries.

EALING

All enquiries to Mrs. Campbell, Savernake School, Astor Road, Ealing, W.5.

FLORIDA (U.S.A.)

President General: Marie Tello Phillips, 6427 Darlington Road, Pittsburgh 17, U.S.A.

GLOUCESTER

Miss Katharine N. James, 4 Beaufort Buildings, Gloucester.

GUILDFORD

Mrs. Coker, hon. secretary, 20 Lichfield Way, Guildford.

HAMPSTEAD

Mrs. Angela Malleson, hon. secretary, 10 Gayton Crescent, London, N.W.3.

HASTINGS, BEXHILL AND DISTRICT

I. K. Bateman, Esq., Ochiltree House, Hastings.

KENSINGTON

Enquiries should be sent to the founder, Mr. A. Vivian Burbury, 12 Bassett Road, London, W.10. Meetings are held monthly on a Tuesday evening.

NOTTINGHAM

Mrs. M. Riley, hon secretary, 25 Medina Drive, Tollerton, Notts.

PITTSBURGH (U.S.A.)

Mrs. Marie Tello Phillips, 6427 Darlington Road, Pittsburgh.

REIGATE

Mrs. M. A. Hicks, The Alton, Alma Road, Reigate.

SHEFFIELD

Enquiries to Miss F. G. Stimpson, 23 Silver Hill Road, Sheffield 11. Meetings: Grand Hotel, monthly.

ST. JOHN'S WOOD, LONDON

Enquiries to Miss Henochsberg and Miss Hewson, 15 Clifton Court, N.W.8.

ST. PETERSBURG (U.S.A.)

President, Mrs. Helen T. D. Robinson, 815 Jackson St. N., St. Petersburg 6. Florida.

THE POETRY SOCIETY

Founded 24th February, 1909 :: Incorporated 18th June, 1923

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

To the General Secretary,
General Offices of The Poetry Society (Incorporated),
33 Portman Square, London, W.1.

I desire to be enrolled as a member; entrance fee and first annual subscription (22/6d.) enclosed herewith.

(*The Annual Subscription becomes due and renewable on the completion of one year from the date of joining. Cheques, etc., should be made payable to The Poetry Society.*)

Name .....

Address .....

.....

Date.....

'WHERE THERE IS NO VISION THE PEOPLE PERISH'

The Poetry Review

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE POETRY SOCIETY
PUBLISHED SINCE 1909 QUARTERLY, PRICE 3/6

ADVERTISEMENT DETAILS

Guaranteed Facing Matter, £15 per page and *pro rata*
Approved Loose Insets, £15 per issue

Series discounts 2½% for 3, 5% for 6, 10% for 12 insertions.

Agency commission or Publishers' discount 10%
Type area 7 ins. deep by 4⅛ ins. wide. Column width 2 ins.
Block screen 85. Latest date for copy 7th preceding.
Press date 15th preceding

Sole Advertisement Representatives:
ALDRIDGE PRESS LIMITED,
27, CHANCERY LANE, LONDON, W.C.2

Telegrams: Presreps. Holb. London *Telephone:* HOLborn 8655 & 8656

SUFFOLK

Miss K. M. Turner, 1 Willoughby Road, Ipswich.

TORONTO (CANADA)

All enquiries to Mr. Thos. G. Ballantyne of Apartment 201, 58 Hillside Drive, Toronto 6. Telephone: Gerrard 8877.

VANCOUVER (B.C.)

Official contact: Mrs. George Maharg, 754 East Broadway, Vancouver, B.C.

THE POETRY SOCIETY: ANNUAL GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING

The Annual General Business Meeting of the Poetry Society (Incorporated) will be held at the offices of the Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1., on Wednesday, 23rd May, 1956, at 3.0 p.m., to receive the annual financial statement, and elect the general members of the General Council. Names of delegates representing Centres should be sent to the General Secretary not later than 6th April, 1956, together with names of the Centre representatives on the General Council.

Admission will be made upon production of membership cards.

Any member who wishes to bring any business before the Annual Meeting must give twenty-eight days' written notice thereof to the General Secretary. Nominations for membership to the General Council must be made by two members of the General Council or three unattached members twenty-eight days prior to the Meeting.

Any member wishing to inspect the audited Statement of Accounts before the General Business Meeting may do so at this office between the hours of 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. (Saturdays excepted), or may have a copy sent on application enclosing a stamped addressed envelope after 30th April.

– By Order of the Council.

NEW YEAR EVENINGS AT PORTMAN SQUARE

'The Battle for Beauty is Never finally Won.'

With the first Friday of the year The Poetry Society begins the following Series of weekly Readings and Talks by Ladies and Gentlemen of Distinction in the World of Art, January to April, at 33 Portman Square, 6.30 to 7.30 approx. Admission 1s., Non-Members 2s. 'Everybody Welcome', and afterwards for an informal hour in the new Rest Room.

January	6	RICHARD CHURCH. 'Three Stages of Creative Impulse.' A talk about his own work, with MARGARET RAWLINGS. Chairman: The President, THOMAS MOULT.
	13	The Venerable ARCHDEACON FOX speaks on Wordsworth and Tennyson. Chairman: REV. F. PRATT GREEN.
	20	Robert Browning. A selection of his poems read by WILTON COLE and CHARLES DORAN.
	27	JACK LINDSAY. 'Poland's Greatest Poet.' – Adam Mickiewicz Centenary Celebration, with readers. Chairman: VIVIAN BURBURY.
February	3	Dylan Thomas 'The Man and his Poetry.' Illustrated Talk by ROBERT ARMSTRONG.
	10	THE HON. CAPTAIN C. B. FRY, R.N.R. 'My Ideas about Form in Poetry.' An Illustrated Talk with readers. Chairman: The President.
	17	'Poets in Person' reading their own work, with discussion. Arranged by ALEC CRAIG.
	24	'Major Themes in Modern Poetry.' Illustrated Lecture by STUART HOLROYD, with selected readers. Chairman: ODETTE TCHERNINE.
March	2	SIR FRANCIS MEYNELL reads Poetry of His Own Choice, and some of his own work. Chairman: THOMAS MOULT.
	9	'Stone in the Midst,' by Patric Dickinson. Special Play Reading arranged by KELTY MACLEOD. Chairman: KATHLEEN V. RICHARDSON.
	16	'World within World,' Stephen Spender. Illustrated Talk by J. M. PURSER, M.A., on the Poet's Attitude to Life and Poetry, with readers.
	23	An Easter Anthology. A reading arranged by BERYL COOKE and REGINALD MATHEWS.
April	6	Commonwealth Poetry. Arranged by KIM CORCORAN, with Members of the Commonwealth resident in England.
	13	Audience Night. Members are again invited to read their own or their favourite poem (limit, three minutes). Chairman: STEPHEN GRAHAM.

The next Gold Medal Examination will be held at 33 Portman Square on 29th May, 7 p.m.